

AN
ESSAY
ON
MORAL AGENCY.



AN
E S S A Y
ON
M O R A L A G E N C Y :

CONTAINING

Remarks on a late anonymous Publication,

ENTITLED,

An EXAMINATION of the late PRESIDENT
EDWARDS's INQUIRY on FREEDOM
of WILL.

BY STEPHEN WEST, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN STOCKBRIDGE.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

PSALM CX. 3.

THE SECOND EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN
A P P E N D I X,
BY THE AUTHOR.

SALEM:

PRINTED BY THOMAS C. CUSHING.
1794.

BRITISH



P R E F A C E.

THE doctrines of divine prescience, and of the liberty and freedom of the creature, have been thought, by many, to be involved in so much darkness and uncertainty, especially when considered in their mutual relation to each other, and the aspect which the one necessarily hath upon the other; that it hath been esteemed a mark of modesty, good sense, and ingenuity, frankly to confess our ignorance in points of such depth and mystery, and yield them up as perfectly incapable of being reconciled, even in idea, the one with the other. With this view and apprehension of things are the minds of some so entirely and perfectly possessed, that the very thought of its being in the power of man to reconcile the *foreknowledge* of God, with the *liberty of will* in creatures, is strongly repelled; and the knowledge of any attempt to shew the consistency of the one with the other, received with sensible uneasiness and displeasure. And yet these are, both, points of undoubted certainty and truth; and that, by the acknowledgment of most of those in whose apprehensions they are so exceedingly mysterious, irreconcilable and incomprehensible. This (if I may be permitted to say it) to me appeareth remarkable. That we should firmly believe doctrines which *in our own view* are perfectly incapable, by any human understanding, of being reconciled together, is like yielding our assent to both parts of a contradiction. And, not only so, but that we should esteem them both of such importance as to make them articles of our
religious

religious faith and belief, and yet be so effectually persuaded of their inconsistency with each other, as to look upon every attempt to reconcile the *liberty and freedom* of men in their actions, with that indissoluble, infallible connexion of all events with some antecedent cause, reason or ground of their existence, which is necessarily implied in the doctrine of the full and perfect *prescience* of God; to me, I confess, appeareth rather an argument of the power of prejudice, and of an unreasonable attachment to some pre-conceived opinion, than of real modesty and true greatness of mind. However, the best of men are, doubtless, liable to prejudice and mistake, and incident to error: and very far would I be from censuring those who differ from me in opinion, respecting the points principally treated on, in the following Essay, as either dishonest or weak. What I would by these observations, is to make it appear that the consistency of *human liberty* with the *prescience* of God, is a subject *fit and proper* to engage the attention of men; and that to evince this consistency cannot be unworthy of the attempt of such as profess themselves advocates for both, and to have a firm persuasion of the truth and importance of them, whatever appearance there may be of inconsistency between them. By *this means* and *in this way* would I bespeak the candour and engage the patience of the reader: hoping that these observations may raise and awaken his attention, to what I have written on the subject.

From such whose minds are soured and prejudiced against every thing that is *new*, and who, even themselves, will be *bitter* against the bitterness of dispute, I have little favour to expect: with them I look for little success. No arguments will administer conviction to them. Nothing can be clear—nothing perspicuous enough to enlighten, convince and persuade them. Such as are resolved to embrace the reigning sentiments and the fashionable opinions; or who take
their

their principles *upon trust*, without examining for themselves and seeing with their own eyes; will probably receive little or no improvement from the following Essay, even though the design of it should be judiciously executed. *These* (if any ~~such~~ there are) are the adversaries from whom I am most apprehensive of danger. *These* commonly make use of weapons, against which there is no defence.

But if there are any who are impartial lovers of truth; who are disposed to careful and critical examination; who are ready to admit *any* point upon proper evidence, even though it be *new*, and opposed by the strong current of prevailing opinion; to them I beg leave humbly to commend the perusal of the following Essay: to *their* judgment and correction I cheerfully submit it: from *them* I hope for instruction and improvement, and by *them* I hope to be set right in points wherein it shall appear that I am wrong. Nor am I without hopes of affording some pleasure, entertainment and improvement to them.

To what I have written upon that most important subject of *the divine agency respecting the event of moral evil*, I earnestly and *particularly* request the careful, critical and candid attention of the reader. Here I have pursued somewhat of an unbeaten path; and not without great fears and apprehensions lest I should say something dishonourable and reproachful to HIM, the honour of whose glorious government and name I have humbly endeavoured to vindicate and defend. Here, in many things I have said, I pretend not to be *positive*—to be *certain*: and any air of peremptoriness which my arguments may be thought to carry in them, I humbly request may be considered as intended and meant to give the argument its greatest advantage, and not to express the *confidence* I have in my own sentiments and opinion. I have written nothing, however, but what appeared to me to be the truth.

Objections

Objections I have endeavoured should appear to advantage, and in their full strength : and whether I am to be accused of giving *weak* answers to *strong* objections, the intelligent reader must judge. After all, if the scheme of doctrine and sentiments here advanced, shall be found, upon careful, strict examination, to imply any thing inconsistent with the most perfect purity and holiness of God, and his utter and infinite hatred of all moral evil ; or any thing inconsistent with the ideas of desert of punishment in the sinner ; I will cheerfully give it up, and heartily condemn and abjure it : and shall think myself obliged to make my most grateful acknowledgments to any one, who shall be at the pains of detecting the weakness and sophistry of those arguments by which I have urged a special divine agency and disposal, giving certainty to the existence of *moral evil* in the system. Yet I cannot but express my hopes that the reasons and arguments which I herewith humbly offer to the public, in support of the doctrine I have presumed to advance, will be a means of diffusing some new light on this important subject ; and will invite some one of a more nice discernment and just and comprehensive view of things, more carefully to examine and thoroughly to scan and canvass the subject.

A vindication of Mr. Edwards, the reader will easily discern, hath not been an object so *particularly* in view in the following Essay. *His* character is but of small importance, compared to that of the cause of truth : but if it was, it appeareth not to need any support which *the author of the following sheets* is capable of giving it. For although it may be true that the author of the *Examination of his Inquiry*, &c. hath detected some lesser errors in that very masterly tract ; yet the grand pillars of his doctrine, I am humbly of opinion, still stand firm and unshaken ; and that justly celebrated performance remaineth as a brazen wall against the prevailing errors of the day. This great
man's

man's writings, though doubtless in many respects imperfect, have yet left a favour in his name, which will make it remembered with gratitude and pleasure by the lovers of truth, and friends of free inquiry.

That so important a subject as that of *Liberty and Agency* (a subject which hath engaged the attention and employed the pens of the greatest *Geniuses* in the several learned nations, in almost all ages of the world) should be undertaken by so young and inexperienced a writer, may be thought by many, perhaps, arrogant and presumptuous. This, however, it is hoped, will not prejudice the reader against the *arguments—the reasons* which are exhibited in support of the leading sentiments of the following *Essay*, and the scheme of doctrine contained in it. The *style and manner* are, doubtless, in many respects very defective, and need the candour and patience of the reader; which, accordingly, are humbly requested. But to ask any favour to the *argument*, would be doing injustice to the cause of truth.

Many things in the *Examiner*, which appeared to me to be exceptionable, have been passed unnoticed; they not falling so directly within the design of the following *Essay*. But the arguments which appeared, to me, to be of principal weight in support of that *freedom of will* for which he professeth himself an advocate, I have, according to my ability, examined and considered. I have not designedly misunderstood or perverted his meaning, nor knowingly wrested his words from their most plain and obvious import, by forced and unnatural construction. But whether I have, in any thing, *corrected* him, and shown his reasonings to be inconclusive and unjust, I must leave to the judgment of the candid and intelligent reader.

I have only to request a patient, fair and impartial hearing; and humbly to ask the united prayers of all
 B the

the lovers and friends of truth, to the great fountain and *Father of lights*, for larger and more abundant measures to be given of that blessed *Spirit* which leadeth and guideth into all truth; that all error, ignorance and darkness may be done away, and light and truth prevail and shine more abundantly, to the *Glory of God*, here in our dark world.

Stockbridge,
27th March, 1772.

INTRODUCTION.

INQUIRIES of this nature, which can be useful to mankind only as they serve to illustrate the nature of that moral agency which is essential to virtue and vice, as far as I have had opportunity to observe, have generally been expressly upon the point of liberty: a term, in some respects, of more doubtful and various signification than that agency itself, in order to a right understanding and just explanation of which, *Liberty* hath been the subject of inquiry and altercation.

Moral Agency is what every one acknowledgeth to be essential to virtue and vice, reward or punishment. But *liberty*, in the sense in which the term is many times used, is not essential to either; but may or may not be possessed, and yet the subject in question have proper desert of punishment, or reward.

Liberty, as the term is used in common language, undoubtely meaneth *a power of doing as we please*. This, I believe, is its most common and natural signification. But a little attention will convince any one that this definition of liberty doth not contain the most essential and important ideas of that agency and freedom which necessarily imply, in them, desert of praise or blame, reward or punishment. *A power to do as we please*, implieth a distinction between the *pleasure* of the will, and the *doing or action* of the person: or, at least, plainly admits it. This definition, therefore,

of liberty, placeth it in something entirely distinct from the *pleasure of the mind*—the exercises of the *will*: though it is very manifest that the pleasure of the mind itself, which is the source of our actions, and is the fountain from whence they proceed, is morally beautiful or deformed, and hath in it proper desert of praise or blame. According to this definition of it, therefore, *liberty* is not an essential ingredient of that agency and exertion of which we may properly predicate virtue, or vice. There may be such exercises and exertions, as, in the common estimation of men, carry in them desert of praise or blame; and yet the subject of these exercises be utterly destitute of that liberty which consisteth in a power of *doing as we please*. The heart, the affection, may be right—the whole of the *internal exercise* may be virtuous and commendable, and such as every one must judge to be worthy of respect and esteem; while the person is entirely restrained from *any outward action*; being bound down by fetters and cords. In this case it is apparent, as Paul says, 2. Cor. viii. 12. that *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. So, on the other hand, there is nothing irrational or incongruous, in supposing that men may be guilty of great and abominable wickedness, while they are forcibly restrained from any outward excess: their *internal exercises* being such (could they be known to mankind) as would be universally censured and condemned. In such a case as this it is very manifestly true, according to the observation of the wise man, that *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*. Prov. xxiii. 7.

It is unnecessary, therefore, in an inquiry into the nature of that moral agency which is essential to virtue and vice, reward and punishment, precisely to ascertain the nature and bounds of *Liberty*, in the various senses in which the term is used among mankind; or expressly and particularly to define it. It is enough
if

if we can gain a clear, full view of that agency of mankind which hath in it proper desert of praise, or blame, and which is necessarily either virtuous or vicious; for in such an agency as this is comprehended all that liberty which dignifieth human nature, and distinguisheth moral beings—accountable agents.

And if we can discover particularly and precisely what that is, which is most directly obedience or disobedience to the will and commands of God;—what it is that *He* looketh upon with esteem and approbation, or with abhorrence and detestation;—what is truly morally beautiful, or really and absolutely deformed; the question concerning *Liberty*, as far as it respects ethicks or morality, will be sufficiently decided.

Whatever be the true idea or definition of *Liberty*, as applied to morals; we may rest satisfied that the just and good God will never either reward or punish any of his creatures, for any of their actions which were not *free* to all intents and purposes, with that kind of freedom, which, in his view, is essential to the nature of virtue and vice. We may, likewise, consider in it, that nothing will be esteemed, by mankind in general, either morally beautiful, or deformed—meriting either commendation, or censure; which hath not all that liberty and freedom in it and predicable of it, which, in the common estimation of men, is essential to moral action—to our being accountable creatures, and proper subjects of, either punishment, or reward.

If I should be so happy as properly to define moral agency, and illustrate the nature and ascertain the idea of it, in the following Essay:—if I should say any thing which may reflect any new light upon this important subject; or open a track which may be pursued to advantage by some abler genius, to a farther discovery of truth and a fuller illustration of the important

portant subject before us ; I shall think myself amply rewarded : and conceive that I do a greater service to mankind, and to the cause of truth in general, than if I should particularly and accurately define the term *Liberty*, in its several and various significations : although when used in a *moral sense*, I mean not to leave it undefined.

How I succeed in an undertaking which, it seems, hath not hitherto been executed to the entire satisfaction of mankind (notwithstanding the ability and judgment with which the subject has been treated) the impartial public must judge. I have only to crave their attention, and candid construction of what I may offer upon the subject.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

SECT. I.

MORAL agency defined, and shown to consist in the exercises of the will. Page 17---37.

SECT. II.

OF POWER. P. 37---58.

SECT. III.

Wherein the nature and influence of **MOTIVES** are carefully examined and explained. P. 58---75.

SECT. IV.

Wherein virtue and vice are shown to consist in the nature of the internal dispositions and inclinations of men, in distinction from their cause. P. 75---88.

SECT. V.

In which is inquired whether there is not an antecedent certainty of the existence of every event which ever taketh place. P. 88---104.

SECT. VI.

Wherein the notion of a power of self-determination in the will, or of originating motion in ourselves, is carefully considered, and the inconsistency of it shown. P. 104---129.

SECT. VII.

Wherein it is shown that the doctrine of an infallible previous certainty of all human volitions, doth not imply that mankind are but mere machines. P. 129---137.

SECT. VIII.

Wherein the Ex---r's reasonings, in several parts of his performance which have not yet been taken notice of, are particularly considered. P. 137---166.

PART II.

P A R T II.

Wherein the divine agency and disposal respecting the taking place of sin in the system, are humbly and carefully inquired into, and particularly considered.

P. 166---169.

S E C T I.

Wherein it is inquired whether the existence and taking place of moral evil are not the occasion of more and greater good, in the system, than could otherwise have been effected and produced.

P. 169---199.

S E C T. II.

Shewing that it was, upon the whole, a desirable thing, that moral evil should come into existence.

P. 199---211.

S E C T. III.

Wherein it is shown that such a positive divine agency and disposal as would give infallible certainty that moral evil should come into existence in the system, are not inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God.

P. 211---221.

S E C T. IV.

Objections considered and refuted.

P. 221---234.

S E C T. V.

Containing some scripture-evidence of a special divine agency and disposal giving infallible certainty to the existence of moral evil.

P. 234---252.

• APPENDIX.

PART I.

SECTION I.

MORAL AGENCY *defined, and shewn to consist in the Exercises of the Will.*

MORAL AGENCY (without any metaphysical subtilty or refinement) consisteth in *Spontaneous, Voluntary Exertion*. Whenever we do any thing voluntarily, and of free choice; we perform a moral action—an action meriting censure or commendation. He who acteth electively, or putteth forth an act of will, is herein a moral agent, and a proper subject of reward or punishment, praise or blame. All the exercises of our wills, our hearts and affections, are of a moral nature. This is the agency which rendereth us accountable creatures; these are the actions for which we are rewardable or punishable in the sight of God.

That *spontaneous, voluntary exertion* is such an agency as hath moral desert in it, and is that whereof it is proper and fitting that we should give an account, seems to be a dictate of natural reason, and the common sense of men; and is what must be on all hands allowed. Even they who plead for a power of *self-determination* in men, and who urge that acts of the will are *self-originated*, or that they spring from their own internal energy and activity; yet concede, that these *acts of the will*, these *voluntary exertions*, have moral desert in them, and really render us fit subjects of punishment, or reward. And it must necessarily

cessarily be so : for from whatever *cause* the acts of the will are supposed to arise ; let it be either *internal* or *external* ; let it be from something peculiar to the *nature* of volition, or from some foreign, extrinsic cause ; it is unreasonable to look into the *cause*, for *that agency itself* which is directly and immediately the object of disesteem or approbation. If there is a power in men to *originate* volition, or to *produce* voluntary exertion ; this power itself, whenever it is exercised, is *voluntary* : and in this spontaneous, free, *voluntary*, exertion of this supposed power, the advocates for it place that liberty and agency which are supposed to be essential to virtue and vice. If the exertion of this supposed power is *not voluntary*, it is of course *involuntary*,* or *necessary* with a natural necessity ; and therefore cannot, consistently with common reason and sense, be taken for *moral agency*, or such an effect, operation or exertion, as is capable of being considered, with the least propriety, as the object of praise or blame.

That moral agency cannot consist in any such power as may be conceived to exist previously to its being put forth into action, and exerted for the production of volition, is evident from this single consideration, viz. That, by the supposition, there is no *agency* or *action* in it.

When we talk of moral agency, we talk of some kind of *action* or *exertion* ; and not merely of something which may be a *foundation* for action, and is yet perfectly and entirely distinct from it. When we speak of a person, or moral being, as the subject of punishment or reward, or as having in him desert of praise or blame, it is agreeable to the common sense and understanding of men, to consider him *as in exercise*—at least *as having put forth* some motion or exertion. It is not common for men either to commend or blame any thing which is merely passive and without any exercise or exertion. It is certainly agreeable to reason to

* The word *involuntary* I here use, not as denoting any *opposition made to the will*, as the term most generally implieth ; but merely as being *without will*, and *without design*.

to look for some real conformity, in a moral agent, to some rule or law which is obligatory on him, or some *positive opposition* to it as a proper ground of praise or blame, censure or commendation.* Where there is no exercise of will—no affection of mind, there is nothing, in a moral sense, either beautiful or deformed.

Whatever, therefore, may be the powers of mankind in respect to the *production* of volition; whatever be the *cause* out of which voluntary exertion ariseth; whether it be internal or external; whether such exertion is *self-originated*, or ariseth as an effect out of some foreign cause; still where such an effect is formed, there is moral agency; and where it is not, there it is in vain to look for moral quality—either virtue or vice.

In *spontaneous, voluntary exertion* is all the freedom which it is possible for any one to enjoy. Here is all

C 2

the

* Against this proposition it may possibly be objected, that "*Want of conformity*" to the divine law, is sinful—*Want of love*, or *not loving* God, is criminal; and therefore, (it may be urged) it is unreasonable to place that moral agency which rendereth us capable of virtue and vice, and makes us the fit subjects of reward or punishment, altogether in *spontaneous, voluntary exertion*. Such an objection I would ask, In whom is "*a want of conformity*," or *want of love*, sinful?—In trees, or in brutes? This will not be pretended. That want of love to God which is to be found in the brutal creation, or in the vegetable world, cannot be criminal. Why then should want of love to God be criminal in man—unless it be, that in all *that want of love* toward God or our fellow-creatures, for which we are chargeable with wickedness in the eye of the divine law, there is some *positive opposition* to love—some *affection of mind* inconsistent with love? It is true, that when we exercise our affection, it ought to be, not in opposition, but in positive love, to God. To exercise any affection respecting the Deity which is wholly without love, is infinitely wrong and criminal. In such a sense as this, it is morally evil *not to love God*. But that which is *merely negative*, hath no quality in it—nothing predicable of it. Where there is no affection inconsistent with love—no exercise of heart carrying in it any opposition to God, or reflection upon him unworthy of his own infinitely excellent and glorious character, there is nothing criminal or offensive to God. That *want of love* which is criminal, is something which hath *undutifulness* in it towards God: it invariably implieth some mental exercise or affection which is inconsistent with love, and which containeth in it *disrespect* to God, and poureth contempt upon him. It is not agreeable to the practice and common sense of men, to censure and condemn any thing which is *negative*, in any other sense than this. If we feel ourselves in great distress, or in imminent danger, and one of our fellow-men should stand by and refuse to lend us his assistance, we should have just reason to cast blame and censure upon him: but if he was fallen into a swoon, or buried in a deep sleep, we should entertain no hard thoughts of him. The reason is plain: his *not assisting us*, in the former case, containeth in it a *criminal indifference* to our safety—some exercise of heart inconsistent with a proper concern for it; in the latter, it doth not. For this reason we justly blame in the one case, and not in the other. So that *want of love* to God which only is criminal, is a want of love which containeth in it some positive opposition or disaffection to God, or such indifference of mind toward him, as is inconsistent with love.

the moral liberty which is any ways essential to reward or punishment, virtue or vice. Whoever acteth voluntarily, acteth in the view of motives : and in the volitions of agents which take place and are exerted in the view of motives, is all the influence which motives have, on intelligent minds. He who exerteth volitions, and exerciseth affections, in the view of motives, acteth like a rational, intelligent, moral agent. He inherits all that moral liberty which it is possible for a creature to enjoy ; and all, which any creature doth or can improve.

Liberty and agency, as it appears to me they have often been made use of in disputes, are terms of such refinement and abstraction as to be incapable of any very clear explanation. While these terms lead us to an inquiry after any thing different from what we all have consciousness of, whenever we exercise our wills and affections, we are pursuing a shadow instead of a substance ; there being no *liberty, freedom, agency, or power of will*, beside what is exercised in voluntary, spontaneous exertion, which any one can sensibly feel and enjoy—which can be of any benefit to any one, or capable of improvement. When we look for that liberty or freedom which dignifieth human nature above the lower creation, we are to search for it only in what every man feels when he exerciseth will and affection, or, in the view of motives, puts forth or exerteth an act of choice. This is what makes a free agent : these are the exercises and powers which constitute human liberty—moral freedom.

Moral liberty essentially consisteth in voluntary exercise. And yet when I say that liberty *consisteth* in voluntary exercise, I would not be understood, that *liberty and volition* are convertible terms, importing precisely one and the same thing. But my meaning is, that in every volition we find liberty, true moral liberty, and the highest kind of it that ever can be found in a moral agent. Motion, and a body moving, are not precisely one and the same thing : yet we can have no
idea

idea of the former, without the latter. So although liberty and volition may not be precisely the same, yet all the idea we have of liberty is to be found in voluntary exertion. Volition may more properly be termed a *free action*, than *freedom*: yet to obtain an idea of liberty, our best way, as in many other cases, is not to consider things abstractly, but to turn our thoughts to the concrete (volition); wherein we shall certainly discover the thing sought for, though it is so difficult, if not impossible, to separate the abstract from the concrete. To be *free*, therefore, and to be *voluntary* in any action whatsoever, either internal or external, I suppose are one and the same thing.

It therefore appears that the question so often agitated, viz. Whether the *Will* is free? is utterly unmeaning and impertinent. Whatever is inconsistent with the freedom of the human will, is equally inconsistent with the very being of it: for taking away its freedom, is destroying its very essence. There is no more propriety in asking whether the *Will* is *free*? than whether the *essential properties* of a subject belong to it? or whether any thing is made up of its constituent parts? It may as well be asked, whether *fire is hot*, or *water fluid*? as whether the *Will* is *free*? and yet every one knows that heat and fluidity are essential properties of fire and water; the ideas of these qualities being necessarily contained in the explanation of the terms. In like manner is freedom essential to the human will; and liberty as essential a property of our voluntary exertions, as heat is of fire, or fluidity of water.

Here is the only liberty, agency or freedom, of which it is possible that mankind should be conscious and percipient. We may with as much reason suppose that mankind are *conscious* and *percipient* of that which is the *ground* of their *first* perception and consciousness; as to suppose that they are conscious of any moral liberty, or power of will, antecedent to, and the ground of, voluntary exertion. The mind is conscious of nothing otherwise than in and by its own exertions.

ertions. As it is conscious of a power of thought and idea, only in thinking and perceiving; so it is conscious of a *power of will*, only in the *exercises of volition*. That the mind should be conscious of a *power of choice* which is distinguishable from *actual choosing*, is no more conceivable, than that we should be conscious of a power of thinking and perceiving, without, at the same time, *feeling or exercising any perception or thought*.

Minds are conversant only with their own ideas: they perceive and are immediately conscious of nothing beside their own exercises and ideas. However the mind may *reason* and *infer* concerning other things, and form premises, and make conclusions, with a great degree of justice and precision; still those things of which we attain the knowledge in such a way as this, are not the objects of direct, immediate perception. If liberty is what we perceive actually to exist in the mind, it can certainly be perceived no otherwise than in its exercise: just as a power of choice can be perceived only in actual choosing. But liberty *exercised* must certainly be a *voluntary exercise*—an exercise of will. And what liberty or freedom any one can perceive to be in *voluntary exercise*, beside what is itself an exertion of will, and is necessarily included in all our *voluntary exertions*, is to me quite inconceivable. It therefore followeth, that there is in mankind no consciousness of liberty or freedom, beside the consciousness necessarily contained in our voluntary exertions. Consequently it is preposterous and unintelligible, to talk of being *conscious* of any power of will, distinct from the *exercise* of will; or, of a power of choosing, distinct from actual choice. *Exercises* of volition, and *making actual choice*, are something of which we all have a consciousness in innumerable instances: and herein is all the *power of will*, the *power of choice*, of which we have any direct and immediate perception.

If mankind have any consciousness or immediate perception of any power of will, distinct from what they
they

they feel in the actual exercises of volition—if they are conscious of any power of action, distinct from the consciousness they have in actual voluntary exertion, and previous to it; they must nevertheless be conscious of this power as *being in exercise*. If they are conscious of this power of will and action as *in actual exercise*; this is in no measure different from being conscious of *actual choice—voluntary exertion*. To be conscious of a *power of will in actual exercise*, is just the same as to be conscious of an exercise of will—actual volition. This I think is obvious.

If they are conscious of a power of will which is antecedent to exercise, and the ground of it, it must be a power wherein men are *involuntary* and *passive*; it being a power resulting from the immediate efficiency of God as its cause; and therefore can, with no propriety, on any principles, be termed *free*. It is objected against the doctrine of an infallible connection in things, that it is inconsistent with the freedom and liberty of the will, to admit, that the exercises of it arise from any extrinsic influence and cause. But no one, I apprehend, will think of asserting, that this *power of will* in men, which is insisted on by some as the next and immediate cause of *voluntary exercise*, doth not arise wholly and entirely from some *extrinsic* influence and cause. Agreeable to the opinions of those, therefore, who make this objection, it is impossible that liberty or freedom should consist in such a power. For in this power, by the supposition, mankind are *in every sense* passive. It was made—created by the Deity, without any agency, influence or choice of their's: and now it is made, it is perfectly involuntary and passive. It is therefore impossible, that *liberty* or *freedom* should consist in any such power as is previous to *voluntary exercise—mental exertion*.

I therefore mention these things to take off the force of the arguments in favor of some power of action in men, distinct from voluntary exertion, which can with any shew of reason be considered as our dignity or privilege,

vilege, pretended to be drawn from the feelings of human nature, and the universal sense and experience of mankind. And if the observations which have been mentioned are just, there are, in fact, no such feelings as are urged, in human nature; nor is it the universal sense of mankind, that human nature is dignified with any such powers; or that it doth inherit or possess them.

Spontaneous, voluntary exertion is something of which all mankind have immediate consciousness and perception. Here is an agency, the existence and reality of which may be supported and proved by all the feelings of human nature, and the universally concurring testimony of all mankind. Here is all the power which is necessary to render any one a moral agent, an accountable creature, and the proper subject of reward or punishment, praise or blame.

But it will probably be expected, that some reasons should be offered in justification of the definition which hath been given of *moral agency*; and, to shew that no power in *men*, previous to voluntary exertion, and the ground thereof, is any ways essential to the morality of actions; or to that agency which is necessary to reward or punishment, virtue or vice. The following reasons appear to me sufficient to justify the definition.

I. That men are the proper subjects of reward and punishment, for all their voluntary, spontaneous exertions. Whatever of desert there may be in other things, it is yet conceded on all hands, that our *voluntary* exertions have moral desert in them. This is a sort of agency which is the object of command and prohibition in the word of God. Accordingly we find that the exercises of affection, voluntary exertions, are subjected to law, and are the direct object of divine precept. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. is the first and great commandment. Nor can any thing justly be considered as having the nature of obedience or disobedience, any farther than it partaketh of *voluntary exercise and affection*. Mere voluntary exercises, of a
certain

certain kind, are accepted as obedience. These, and these only, are our conformity to the divine law. And so much do all obedience and disobedience consist in the exercises of the will, so much do our voluntary exertions constitute the very essence and formal nature of virtue and vice, that no man will ever be, either rewarded or punished, for any thing beside his exercises of affection—spontaneous, voluntary exertions. Whatever action or event taketh place without any concurrence of our wills, or otherwise than as the fruit of our voluntary exertion, and which hath nothing of our will or choice in it, will never be set to our account for adjusting our reward or punishment.

It is agreeable to the common sense and opinions of men, that all spontaneous, voluntary exertions carry in them desert of either punishment or reward. It is a maxim established by the universal sense of mankind, that the exercises of our affections are, in their very nature, either virtuous or vicious.* And so universally doth a sense of desert on this account prevail among mankind, that in order to determine any man's character and desert; we always accustom ourselves to inquire into *his motives*, and the *temper, disposition* or *state* of mind from whence his outward actions and conduct proceed. Here, all acknowledge, are to be found moral quality and desert. In the *exercises of affection* do men place virtue, or vice.

These observations are abundantly confirmed by the Author of the *Examination of the late President Edwards's Inquiry on Freedom of Will*. He considereth all moral good and evil as consisting in the disposition or estate of the mind or will. (p. 31.) He says (p. 96) that *we approve good intentions, and condemn evil ones, in ourselves (and in others, so far as such affections can be known.)* And in the same place he represents it,

D

that

* Dr. Taylor, in his *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, greatly insisteth that all sin lieth in the choice of the mind. Thus he tells us (p. 127. edit. 2.) that the original cause "of sin is a man's choosing to follow the appetites of the flesh;" that "sin proceedeth from our own choice, as it necessarily must;" (p. 130) that "vice is always the faulty choice of a person's own will, otherwise it is not choice." (p. 190.) And he representeth *lust*, or *irregular desire*, as being itself sinful. (p. 213.)

that whatever the outward actions of men *in fact* are, they are judged according to what they *would* have done. He saith, further, that *though natural necessity exerciseth the outward act, it hinders not but the estate of the will may be right or wrong.* The justness of these observations depends entirely upon the supposition that virtue and vice are properly and directly predicable of the exercises of affection—free, spontaneous, voluntary exertions. If, in the exercises of such affections simply, there is nothing virtuous or vicious, commendable or criminal; then surely we are to look farther back than to the *intentions* of men, or the *state of their wills*, for virtue and vice.

II. There is nothing morally beautiful or deformed in any thing beside the exercises of affection—spontaneous, voluntary exertion. Where there is no affection of any kind, there is nothing which beareth any resemblance of the moral character of the Deity; nor, any thing opposite to it. Where there are no exercises of affection, it is impossible that there should be any degree of obedience to that great command of LOVE, wherein is the fulfilling of the law: and, I may add, where there is no affection, as little is there of opposition to it. If the great and only moral beauty in the universe consisteth in *love*, in its several and different exercises and modifications (all which consist in certain positive exercises of affection) it is in vain to look for *moral beauty*, where there is an entire want and negation of all mental, voluntary affection: and our expectations of finding any moral turpitude or deformity, will be as utterly fruitless, if we search for it in something which is wholly destitute of all mental exercise and affection. We may as well look for moral beauty in the order, proportion and harmony of the natural system, or in the colours of the rainbow, as in any thing whatsoever, which is wholly void of mental exercise and affection. And we may as rationally predicate moral turpitude and deformity of barren deserts and ragged mountains, as of any thing
which

which is utterly destitute of all voluntary affection and exertion. There is nothing, either in any beauty, or deformity, which can be found in *any thing* that is wholly without mental exercise and affection, that is any way distinguishable from the beauty and deformity of *natural things*; which none pretend to be either virtuous or vicious. And if it is indeed so that there is no moral beauty or deformity in any thing beside the exercises of affection—free, voluntary exertion; in such exertion, doubtless, is to be found that agency which distinguisheth moral beings, and is the proper ground of our accountableness to God.

III. The remorse of conscience which wicked men feel, is upon no other ground than that of the supposed evil and turpitude of exercises of affection—voluntary, spontaneous exertion: This, therefore, is an argument that *moral agency* consisteth in such affections and exertions. When we do any outward action for which we condemn ourselves, our remorse always terminates upon the affection from whence it proceeded, and which was the cause of it:—All the ground of sorrow is, that we *exercised* and *indulged* such affections and inclinations. We feel ourselves justly condemned for any wicked action, upon the consideration that *our hearts were in the thing*, and we did it *voluntarily and freely*. No one pretends to look any farther back than to the *voluntary design and intention*, for a ground of praise or blame. An awakened conscience never referreth us farther back than to the *affection—the intention* of the mind. And if *bad design and intention* can be fastened upon us, all our pleas fail, and our excuses vanish, and our own consciences condemn us.

In these observations I have the Ex—r's concurrence, in the following words. He saith, (p. 97) *We are condemned or approved of ourselves for a willing or unwilling mind; and have a natural apprehension that the judgment of God will second our own*—A natural apprehension, however, which, I must observe, is very ill founded, unless there is something worthy of being

approved or condemned in the *exercises of the will*, or in *voluntary exertions*. Our Author, I am sensible, presently adds, that "the inward perturbation vicious men feel, proceeds from a conviction that they might have cultivated another frame of heart." But if by "*cultivating another frame of heart*," he intends any thing distinct from voluntary exertion—any thing *without volition* and without design; the assertion is as irreconcilable with his own previous observation, as with the argument now under consideration. If by *cultivating another frame of heart* our Author intends to denote any *exercise of mind or heart*, it must unquestionably be *voluntary*: for no other exercise, particularly on his principles, can be a reasonable ground of any inward perturbation at all. And if this expression is designed to convey the idea of any *exercise of will*, or *voluntary exertion*, instead of weakening, it strengtheneth and confirmeth the argument under consideration. But if the Ex—r, by this expression, intends any thing which is wholly involuntary and undesigning; it is quite unjust to speak of *intentions* as being either good, or evil; or, to lead his readers to apprehend that there is any thing which ought to be, either *approved* or *condemned*, in *willingness* or *unwillingness* of mind.

IV. Another argument in favor of the definition which hath already been given of moral agency, is, that mankind are *agents* in nothing but *spontaneous, voluntary exertions*. Whatever event comes into existence, in which we have no voluntary intention and design; whatever effect is brought to pass, without any concurrence of our wills; is never deemed *our action*: we are not answerable for it. If we can plead that we were not *agents* in any affair; that any event, however disagreeable, hath taken place and existed otherwise than as the fruit of our *voluntary exertion*, and without the *concurrence* of our wills; this will ever be considered as sufficient to excuse and acquit us from any blame in the case: and for this very obvious

ous reason, viz. that nothing but our *own actions*—something wherein we *exerted ourselves*, and were *agents*—can, with any appearance of equity and justice, be charged to *our account*.

Let the question be as it will respecting the *powers* of human nature; whether the volitions of agents are *self-originated*; or, whether they derive from some foreign, extrinsic cause; still nothing but the *exercise* of these powers in *voluntary exertions* can, with any propriety, be thought to *incur* censure, or merit commendation. Whatever are the powers of mankind; there is nothing more to be found in the *exercise* of these powers, than *voluntary, spontaneous exertion*.—Where we behold voluntary exertion, we behold every thing that can be found in the exercise of all those faculties and powers, for which the most strenuous advocate for the *powers* and *dignity* of human nature ever pleadeth. All the real benefit and privilege of any liberty that is ever insisted on as being essential to moral agency, is to be found in voluntary exertion. No notion of freedom, that has ever been espoused and advanced, dignifieth mankind above this.

If it is true, as our Author urgeth, (p. 109) and as is universally insisted on by the advocates for a power of self-determination in men, that a *freedom to either side* is essential to moral liberty, and consistent with all principles of moral action, and all doctrine of any influence of motives upon the minds of men, which is capable of being vindicated and explained; yet this freedom to either side is *exercised* only in the mind's freely determining itself to *one side*, rather than the other. But such a free determination of mind to one side, rather than the other, is nothing more than the mind's preferring the one to the other, by a free, *voluntary* determination. So that, upon the whole, nothing is found in the mind more than *voluntary, spontaneous exertion*. The highest powers of human nature, therefore, that are ever boasted of, when they come to be applied to use, and put forth into exercise, amount

amount to nothing more than an *act of choice or preference—free, voluntary, spontaneous exertion*. Even the doctrine of *internal liberty*, which the Ex—r so strenuously urgeth in opposition (as he imagines) to Mr. Edwards, extendeth to nothing farther than a choice, preference, or preponderation of mind towards some certain objects rather than others; the whole of its benefit and exercise being comprehended in voluntary, spontaneous exertion.

V. In judging of human actions, and determining the nature and quality of them, mankind never carry their inquiries farther back than to the state, temper or disposition of the mind from whence the actions of men arise. When we have obtained a view of the disposition, and are satisfied what was the internal state of the mind—the voluntary exercise, in any outward action; we then immediately form our judgment and opinion, without once looking for the *cause* of that particular state of mind, or voluntary exertion. A view or conviction of what *the heart or the affection* really is, or of what is indeed *the very choice of the mind*, always terminates the inquiry, and fixeth the judgment in regard to the beauty or deformity of the action. Upon this ground alone it is that we form our judgment of the characters of men, or any moral beings; determining and judging them to be either good, or bad, only by their *volitions*, and according to the nature of them. And if these observations are just (as every one I believe will find, upon a little reflection upon the exercises of his own mind in judging of actions and characters of men) it certainly followeth from them, that the reason and common sense of mankind place the *exercise* of that liberty which is essential to the morality of actions and characters, in the *exercises* of the will—in voluntary exertion. And certainly no liberty can be of any benefit, otherwise than in use and exercise; which consideration rendereth the inquiry after the *substratum* of liberty, in some mysterious, incomprehensible power of self-determination, quite nugatory and fruitless.

Should

Should it be objected, here, that we cannot reasonably conclude the character of any one to be morally bad, from the *exercises of his will*, otherwise than on the supposition of the *existence* of some powers in human nature *previous* to actual choice and volition; or, some sufficiency or ability in men to originate choice, and produce volition; and, therefore, that the criminality of *volitions* must be ultimately resolved into the state of the mind, or man, which was its proper and immediate cause: I say, should such an objection as this be urged against the argument under consideration, I would reply,

1. That this objection entirely divesteth volitions of all moral quality whatsoever, and placeth virtue and vice wholly in the *cause* of the voluntary exercises of our minds. It strips the exercises of men's wills of *moral quality*; as much as the consideration of their being the mere passive effects of *voluntary exertions*, doth *outward actions*. According to this objection, it is as impertinent to talk of the moral deformity and turpitude of *volitions*, any otherwise than in a relative, indirect view, as it is to speak of the moral evil of *outward actions*, otherwise than in reference to *internal, voluntary exercises* as their cause: a manner and figure of speech, on this supposition, as far-fetched and improper, as that would be which should attribute something morally wrong to the motion of a ball, struck by a bat in the hand of a voluntary agent. If there is any weight in this objection, whenever we speak of the moral evil of *volitions*, we must be understood, if we would be thought to talk with propriety and good sense, to predicate something morally bad of volitions, *only indirectly and figuratively*, and in a view of their standing in some particular relation to something which is wholly involuntary and undesigning. And if moral evil is to be sought in any thing wholly involuntary and undesigning, it will probably be difficult to give a reason why it should be sought, rather in the *cause* than in the *effect* of volition—in something which goeth

eth before it, rather than in what is consequent upon it.

And besides, if the moral evil of volitions (if indeed, on this supposition, there is any propriety in speaking of *volitions* as being morally evil) consisteth in their cause, viz. *the state of the mind, or disposition of the man* (if the cause of voluntary exertion may be so styled) by a parity of reason this *state of the mind*, this *disposition of the man*—being not itself uncreated, being not self-originated—can, also, be considered as morally evil and bad, only indirectly and figuratively, and as related to *its* cause. If *volitions* may be excused from blame on account of their relation to *some cause*, the next and immediate cause of volitions (supposed to be the *particular state of the mind, or man*) may likewise stand excused upon a like plea of relation to some still more distant cause; and so on, until we get back to a cause which is first and original, standing itself in no relation to any other antecedent or prior cause.

But if things which we have accustomed ourselves to term morally evil and bad, are so only on account of their relation to something else *which is their cause*; this *first*, this *original* cause, standing in no such relation to *any thing* else whatsoever, cannot, with the least reason or propriety, have *moral evil* predicated of it. How subtil and ingenious are the devices of men, to shift off all blame from themselves, and ease their minds of those dark forebodings, and gloomy apprehensions, which could not but possess and fill their minds, if they gave full scope to *reason*, and suffered *conscience* to do its office! I am humbly of opinion, that such a way of representing the matter—such groundless and subtil refinements—have a natural tendency to erase from the minds of men, all sense of moral desert, and at once set mankind loose from all the ties of conscience, and the restraints arising from the natural apprehensions which possess us of our being accountable creatures, rewardable or punishable for our actions. And yet,

2. To

2. To suppose the evil of voluntary exertions ariseth from the *badness of the disposition, or state of the man*, is to suppose that there is moral evil in the *disposition itself, or state of the mind*, out of which voluntary exertions arise; and from this supposition taketh all its strength. But this is a supposition, we may at once see, importing that the moral evil of any thing consisteth in the *nature* of it, not in its *cause*:—a sentiment very obnoxious to Gentlemen who plead (however inconsistent with themselves *even in this very article*) that acts of the will are *self-originated*—not arising from any foreign, extrinsic cause. After what the Ex—r hath said concerning this sentiment, we may justly conclude that he will not urge an objection which is incumbered with it. But this is not the only difficulty attending the objection under consideration, in this particular form of it: For,

3. To suppose that the moral evil and sinfulness of volitions consisteth in the particular state or disposition of the mind or man out of which they arose, is an argument founded wholly upon the supposition of a connexion of acts of the will, with some antecedent cause; and deriveth all its strength from it. To resolve the moral evil of *volition* into the *state of the mind* from which it ariseth, or the *disposition of the man* whose volitions they are (considering *disposition* as being something perfectly distinct from voluntary exertion, and the *ground* of it) entirely establisheth the doctrine of *connexion* between the *volitions* of agents and some antecedent *cause*; yea, and that such an one as is wholly extrinsic of volitions:—an opinion perfectly inconsistent with all ideas of a power of self-determination in the will, or self-origination of volition.

If there is *no connexion* between the volitions of agents, and any *antecedent* state of the mind, or man, it is utterly unreasonable to charge their iniquity and depravity to the account of such a cause. Nor, indeed, is it reasonable to charge the sinfulness of *volitions* to any *cause* whatsoever. The sinfulness of a

cause is one sinfulness ; the sinfulness of its *effect*, another. If the volitions of agents are sinful, their sinfulness lies in themselves, and not in something else. It is perfectly unintelligible, to talk of the sinfulness of any thing, as being in *something else* beside the thing deemed sinful. So that if the cause of sinful volitions is *also* sinful ; the volitions themselves, likewise, are so : and, consequently, there is moral agency in volitions, or voluntary exertions. If moral agency or liberty is essential to the accountableness of creatures, and their being the proper subjects of reward or punishment, praise or blame ; if there is *no connexion* between the volitions of agents and *any antecedent cause*, in determining the deformity and moral turpitude of *actions* ; we of consequence have nothing to inquire into, beside the *nature* of voluntary exertions. There is nothing which can, with any propriety, be termed either a good or a bad state of mind, in a moral sense, beside volition, or voluntary exertion.

If there *is* a connection between antecedent state of mind, and voluntary exertions ; this implieth all the necessity which that great Author, upon whom the Ex—r is animadverting, ever urgeth. This implieth a necessity as inconsistent with the Ex—r's idea of liberty, as the most obnoxious sentiment of HOBBS, SPINOZA, or the late Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS. And to concede any such connexion, is utterly inconsistent with all ideas of that self-origination of motion and volition, which our Author considereth as being essential to accountableness and liberty.

These observations, if they are just, do certainly make it appear, that all the *ideas* we can have of moral deformity and turpitude, are to be found in spontaneous, voluntary exertion ; whatever we may *talk* of depravity and corruption, as consisting in the *cause* of human volitions—in something which is involuntary and without design. This, therefore, is a strong argument to the present point, viz. that moral agency consisteth in voluntary exertions.

VI. If

VI. If moral agency doth not consist in spontaneous, voluntary exertion ; it must, of course, consist in something which is wholly without volition and without design. No medium can be chosen betwixt *voluntary* and *involuntary*, which can possibly assist us in exploring the nature of that agency which is essential to virtue and vice, praise and blame. There is nothing we can behold, or any ways apprehend, which is neither voluntary nor involuntary, but holding a medium between them. Nothing, indeed, can be an object of human apprehension or conception, which doth not fall under either the one or the other of these predicaments. Every effect, every object which we behold, or of which we can form any manner of idea or conception, is either voluntary or the contrary.

For any one to urge, that moral agency consisteth in any thing which is *involuntary*—wholly without volition and design—is inconsistent with all the ideas of liberty which Gentlemen who are advocates for a power of self-determination in men entertain, as well as with reason and common sense. This opinion would place *liberty*, or moral agency, in that which is *no action at all* ; it would predicate *moral quality*, of mere, necessary, involuntary effects.

If it should be urged, that moral agency consisteth partly in voluntary exertion, and partly in something which is *involuntary* ; this would as truly, in a degree, contradict the natural, plain dictates of reason and common sense, as the supposition that it consisteth in something which is *wholly* involuntary and without design : for if virtue and vice may be predicated in *any degree* of that which is *involuntary*, the utter, entire involuntariness and undesigning nature of any thing will be no proof that it is without *moral quality*, virtue or vice.

It therefore unquestionably appeareth, that all that moral agency which renders us fit subjects of reward or punishment, praise or blame, consisteth in *spontaneous, voluntary exertion*. We can give no description of

any thing beside this, which will comport with the common ideas and apprehensions of men, concerning the nature of virtue and vice; and I may add, can *form no idea of moral action* different from this. In voluntary exertions are contained all the ideas of any liberty which is essential to our being accountable creatures—the proper subjects of reward or punishment, praise or blame. So unnecessary is it to look beyond voluntary exertion for that liberty which is essential to the morality of actions, that it is quite inconsistent with it. Nothing which is involuntary, hath any degree of liberty or moral agency in it.

But in such liberty, such an agency, as this, the minds, the hearts, of men cheerfully and universally acquiesce. It is a dictate of the reason and the common sense of men, that such an agency as this renders men the fit subjects of punishment or reward. Upon this ground it is thought “we are condemned or approved of ourselves, for a *willing* or an *unwilling* mind; and have a natural apprehension, that the judgment of God will second our own.” And when our Author speaks of the *cultivation of the frame of the heart* as being something morally good or evil, he cannot, I think, design to convey an idea, by the expression, of any thing distinguishable from voluntary exertion—any thing which is involuntary, and in that sense necessary.

If any one, therefore, inquireth, Wherein consists that liberty which is essential to moral agency, virtue and vice?—it must be replied, In *spontaneous, voluntary exertion*. Unless the term *liberty* is used in a sense so abstracted and refined as to be incapable of explanation, this answer must certainly be satisfactory. In what is necessarily involved in the idea of our voluntary exertions, we find every thing that is essential to virtue and vice. And whenever we behold such agency as this, we do necessarily, and without reasoning and reflection, in a moral view, approve or disapprove of it: nor doth any thing else ever gain our esteem, or incur our disapprobation. I

I am sensible, that *power of will, power of choice, power of action*, &c. are expressions in common use among mankind; and must therefore be supposed to have a meaning, and contain some idea in them. We often hear men talk of a *power of action* as being necessary to moral agency; as it certainly is: but the word Power is of doubtful, uncertain signification, in this application of it. It will therefore be necessary particularly to inquire into the nature of Power, and (if we can) ascertain the bounds, and describe the meaning, of it. This shall be the business of the next section.

S E C T. II.

Of P O W E R.

INQUIRIES into the nature of liberty and agency, it appears to me, have been greatly embarrassed and perplexed by the vague and indeterminate sense in which the word POWER hath been used in such like disputes. It seems to be often used to denote some *privilege*—some *sufficiency* there is in men for some event, over and above any thing of which we are conscious in mere voluntary exertion. Thus a power of thinking—of understanding—of will—seemeth, many times, to be considered as some *power, opportunity, or sufficiency*, there is in men, to *begin* or *produce* thought, understanding or volition:—a *power*, consequently, which is without thought, without understanding, and without will—a *power* stripped naked, and divested of every thing whereby it can ever possibly be known, distinguished, or enjoyed. Even the accurate Mr. LOCKE speaketh of a *power to begin actions of the mind, by a preference of the mind*. [See Hum. Und. Vol. I. Chap. 21. Sec. 5.] As if the *action* and *preference* of the mind were so different from each other, as that they might properly be treated of, as *cause* and *effect*!

Or,

Or, as if the mind was not always *in action*, when it *prefers* any thing !

The meaning of the word Power, as applied both to natural and moral things, requireth careful explanation. I shall examine the term, in the present section, with care and strictness ; endeavoring, as far as I am able, to clear the subject of the difficulties with which it hath usually been perplexed. I beg the Reader's careful and candid attention to the following observations on the subject.

I. The word Power, as applied to natural, inanimate things, I believe, in common use, intendeth and implieth nothing more than a *fitness or capacity for being the subject of some certain effects, from external influence*. Thus there is a power of *fertility*, or of *being rendered fruitful*, in the earth ; of *vegetation*, in plants and herbs ; and, of *resistance, elasticity and motion*, in bodies. And all that we can consistently mean, by such like expressions, is, that the earth, and different bodies upon it, are subject to certain particular alterations and changes, from some certain kinds of influence and operation upon them. Where we behold, in natural bodies, certain visible, discernible effects arise from the application or influence of some external cause ; there we accustom ourselves to speak of bodies as having, or being endued with, certain *powers*. This susceptibleness in bodies, of certain, particular kinds of influence ; or, a fitness and adaptedness in them, to be the subjects of certain effects ; we usually express by the term Power. Thus we find, by experience, that the air, under certain given circumstances, is *expanded* ; under others, *compressed* : hence we say, that the air hath a *power* of expansion and compression. But if we use the expression with propriety, we can mean nothing more by it, than the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for certain discernible alterations and effects, in sensible things, from some particular kind of external influence and cause. But not having ever observed any such effect in *water*, from
any

any cause we have known to operate upon it ; we say, *water* hath neither a *power of being expanded*, nor *compressed* : and yet, all that we can consistently mean by such an expression, is, to deny any foundation, in the nature of things, for any such effect in *water*, from the operation of any cause, or external influence, which hath ever fallen under our observation.

In a sense similar to this do we use the phrases, *Power of Motion*—of *Elasticity*—of *Gravitation*. We mean, by such like terms and phrases, to describe something which we call capacity in bodies of becoming the subjects of certain discernible alterations, and perceptible effects, from the operation and influence of some external cause : or (to speak more philosophically) we mean to express *the foundation there is, in the nature of things, under certain given circumstances, for such perceptible, sensible effects.*

These observations are sufficient to determine the meaning of the word *Power*, when applied to mere senseless, inanimate things ; and shew, that we intend nothing more by it, than the capacity there is in material things, of being the subjects of certain discernible alterations and changes, upon the application of some external influence and operation : and this is, really, nothing more than the foundation there is in nature, for the taking place of effects, in a certain particular series, connexion and order.

These remarks, it is hoped, may furnish us with some materials for a proper explanation of the *powers of human nature* ; and for ascertaining the meaning of the expression.

The expression, *the powers of human nature*, when it is used in its real analogy to the word *POWER*, as applied to inanimate, material things, can import nothing more than a capacity there is, in human nature, of becoming the subject of certain particular sensations, apprehensions, and voluntary exertions. We have observed it to be a general law of nature, or rather of divine operation, that, under certain circumstances,
men

men should be the subjects of certain *feelings, exercises and sensations*. Accordingly we say, that man hath a power of thought—of understanding—and of will—to express the different kinds of effect of which he may be the subject, under certain circumstances, and from some particular influence and application. But when we speak of men as having a power of *thinking and willing*, it is as distant from all reason and common sense to conceive an idea, from this expression, that men are *the subjects of their own influence*, in thinking and willing, as it is, from the similar expression, in reference to natural things, to conceive the earth itself, and natural bodies upon it, to be the *subjects of their own influence*, in attraction, vegetation, and the other sensible effects which we observe are constantly taking place in the material world. If the human mind *is the subject* of its own influence, in thinking and willing; it must be an influence that is exerted *without thought, and without design*: a consideration, which at once takes away its sufficiency for being *the cause* of thought, and of will. But it is no more agreeable to common sense, to imagine that men are the *subjects of their own influence*, in thinking and willing, than, that matter is the *subject of its own influence on itself*, in that tendency we observe in the various parts of material things to each other, and to one common centre, which we mean to express by the terms Gravitation and Attraction. It is quite as agreeable to common sense, to suppose, that the tendency which we observe in natural bodies, upon the surface of our earth, to its centre, is the effect of some secret and very mysterious influence exerted *by the bodies themselves upon themselves*, causing them to gravitate toward the centre; I say, this is a supposition quite as agreeable to common sense, as the opinion which supposeth that mankind exert an influence on themselves, *causing them to put forth thought, and exert acts of will*. And one would render himself ridiculous to use the word Power, in reference to inanimate things, in such a sense as this; and

and to express such a mixed and inconceivable kind of influence : and would plainly shew himself to be an utter stranger to nature, and to its laws. And yet to conceive that the expressions, *The powers of human nature*, *The powers of mankind*, import that those mental and moral exercises, which take place in rational, intelligent agents, are fruits and effects of some certain influence exerted by these same agents upon themselves in order to *beget* and *produce* mental action and exertion, I must take liberty to be of opinion, is not at all less ridiculous and absurd.

If any should object, that, by the word Power, when applied to inanimate, material things, we mean something wholly *natural* ; but, by the same term, when applied to men, and expressing something peculiar to rational, intelligent agents, we mean something wholly *moral* ; and that, therefore, there can be no just reasoning from the one to the other—this would relieve no difficulty, nor at all assist and help our apprehensions of the matter : for to say that the powers of matter are merely *natural* ; whereas, by the acknowledgment of all, these powers of mankind, which are the subject of controversy, are altogether of the *moral kind* ; only expresseth the different kinds of effects, of which rational beings and inanimate things are the subjects, from the influence of some external influence or cause : the one of these effects we term *moral*, and the other *natural* ; only because the one is *voluntary*, the other *involuntary* : the distinction of terms refers only to the difference of the effects ; and was made with no view to distinguish the nature and operation of the several *causes* of them. A *moral cause* signifieth a *voluntary, designing* one ; a *natural*, one that is *without will* and *without design* : so also of effects which may be termed *moral*, and *natural* ; we are to understand by the former, such as are *designing* and *voluntary* ; by the latter, such as are *without design* and *without will*. The terms *moral* and *natural*, as used in this evasion, are of the same import with *voluntary*

F

luntary and *involuntary* (by *involuntary* meaning only *without all exercises of will*) and carry no other idea in them.

Hitherto, the Reader will keep in mind, I have treated of Power only as indicating a fitness in any thing to be the subject of particular influence; and to have certain effects appear in it, upon the application of such influence to it. One thing which comes into consideration, and is of importance, in determining the several natures of things, and their specific differences from each other, is, their fitness and adaptedness to be the subjects of some certain kinds of influence; and to have certain effects appear in them, upon the application of such influence to them, and its exertion upon them. Thus we find the air to be expanded by heat; and that bodies are moved by the influence of certain degrees of external force upon them. Upon this ground it is that we say the air has a *power* of expansion; and bodies, the *power* of motion. So, from the influence of some cause or other, we find men to be the subjects of understanding and volition. Hence we say, they have a *power* of intellect, and a *power* of will.

This, it appears to me, is all that we can consistently mean by the expressions, *A Power of Understanding*, and *Power of Will*, if we use them to denote any thing previous to all perception and voluntary exertion. When we behold these *effects*, as in other cases, so in this, our minds frequently recur to a *cause*: and from an uniformity of effect, we infer uniformity of cause, and of its influence and operation. From a general uniformity, also, of divine operation (things continuing as they are) we conclude and infer a similarity of effects, and look forward to it: we expect events to take place in the same series and order, in which we have observed them already to come uniformly into existence. That constitution and establishment of things, which is the ground of such like reasonings, and the uniformity of their operation and issue, is what

we mean to express by the word Power, as applied to *natural things* ; and, frequently, as applied to intelligent beings, or moral agents.

Not that I apprehend this to be the only sense in which the word Power may be used with propriety, as applied to *moral agents—to men*. Far otherwise : for it may doubtless be used with propriety to indicate and point out some abilities properly *in men*—something wherein man is a moral agent, and on account of which he is a fit subject of praise or blame, commendation or censure. The definition of Power, in this use and application of the term, as far as I am able, I shall presently give. But it may be worth our while first to spend a little time in comparing the ideas of Power, entertained by those Gentlemen who espouse the doctrine of a contingency of events, with the definition which hath been already given ; and see if these ideas are any where to be found in it.

If, by a *power of self-determination*, as the phrase is frequently used by Gentlemen on that side of the question, and by the Author of the Examination of Mr. EDWARDS's Inquiry—a *power of will, a power of choice, &c.*—be meant nothing more than some foundation there is, in the nature of things, for our being the subjects of certain exercises of choice ; Calvinistic divines have no contention with them. If by *capacity of choosing, faculty of will, &c.* be understood the foundation there is, in the nature of things, or the particular constitution of any being, for becoming the subject of such kind of effects ; the expression will not lead to that confusion which hath very generally attended the use of it. Used in this sense, it will not carry away the mind into a dark apprehension of some secret and mysterious power, which exerteth influence upon itself, to rouse up and first awaken itself into action :—a notion, than which nothing can possibly be more repugnant to itself, and to common sense ; or more directly and infallibly destroy and take away all ground and possibility of its own existence. If there *is* any such

power as this in human nature, it is by no means contained within the definition of power which hath been but now given. This definition is far from comprehending it: yea, I may say there must be a definition *coined* for it, and terms of greater energy, and more expressive, than our *dry, barren language* will afford, be invested to describe, and in its full strength express, the idea, to the weak minds and feeble apprehensions of men.

If men *may be* the subjects of volition and choice, it in no measure from thence followeth that they, by some mental exertion of their own, *originate* their own volitions. A fitness, or adaptedness, in any thing, to be the subject of a *certain kind of influence*, and, in consequence of that influence, to have certain effects appear in it, doth, in no degree, *of itself*, determine whence this influence ariseth—whether it is from within, or from without. For a person to be a subject *capable of having exercises of will*, and for him to *originate* these exercises, are two very different things; the propositions affirming them being no ways connected together. The power which Arminian divines plead for, and the power which hath now been defined, are so far from being one and the same, that they are entire opposites; at least, stand in opposite relations to each other. The one is a power *to operate*; the other, a power *to be wrought upon*: the one puts forth power, and exerciseth influence, in order to produce effects; the other is a fitness, or adaptedness, to have effects of a certain kind appear in it: the one is what Mr. LOCKE calls active power; the other, passive: the one *exerts* influence; the other is the *subject* of it. The Reader, I think, will very easily observe, that the idea of a power of self-determination in the will, or of a self-origination of motion within ourselves, is no where to be found among the ideas contained in the definition of Power which hath been already given. The power which hath been already described is very different from that power of self-determination in the will,

will, which is by many insisted on, as being essential to moral action—praise and blame, virtue and vice. I shall now,

II. Attempt to illustrate that idea of Power, which denoteth and indicateth some ability properly *in men*—something wherein man is a *moral agent*, and in which there is desert of praise or blame, esteem or disapprobation. Any power, which hath moral quality and desert in it, necessarily implieth *exercise of will*, or *voluntary exertion*. Nothing short of voluntary exercise incurs censure, or meriteth commendation; or is any way properly and directly the object of *affection*.

Such a power as this, as the word is generally used, implieth *sufficiency for some certain event*. That is a power to perform any thing, which, when exerted, is productive of the desired event. When any event taketh place *upon our choosing it, and in connexion with our choice*; according to the use and import of the word in common language, we have the *power* of that event, or *power* to produce it. When the event, which is the object of choice, doth not follow the election of the mind, or voluntary exertion towards it; then, according to common language, it is not in our power. Any event which comes into existence immediately upon our choosing it, and whose existence depends on the choice of our minds—as effects on their causes, and consequents on their antecedents—may properly be said to be *in our power*.

Only I desire to have it remembered here, that Power, in this construction of it, is not *essential* to moral agency, virtue and vice. The mind may be free, and exert itself with great strength, without any of this power. There may be strong exertions of mind toward some certain object, and yet its existence be in no measure connected with these mental exertions towards it. But this want of connexion of event, with the choice of the mind, doth not at all destroy or take away that agency which hath virtue, or vice, directly predicable of it. The *endeavors* of a man may be good,

or bad, in a moral sense, and yet fail of success. The moral beauty and deformity of *affections* do not at all depend upon their connexion with any outward event. This, I think, is agreeable to the common sense of mankind.

Upon this ground it is, that "we are condemned" or approved of ourselves, for a *willing* or *unwilling* "mind." Upon this ground it is, that we rate the character of a benefactor, or an enemy, by his *designs* and purposes towards us, as far as we are capable of discerning and discovering them; and not by his ability actually to assist or injure us.

To illustrate the idea of Power, in this latter construction of the term, I would observe the following things.

1. That the object of power, when the word is used to denote some ability and sufficiency properly *in men*, is something future—something distinct from present volition, or our present voluntary exertions. Present volition having already gained existence, and therefore being *necessarily* what it is; it is now too late for any power to be exerted to determine the nature of it. It is altogether impossible that there should be any cause, from the operation of which it can become true, that *present volition* should be what it really is not, or not what it really is. New volitions, or a different state of mind from what at present is, may be the fruit of the operation of some external cause; or, even of present voluntary exertion: but it is quite too late for any cause to exert its influence, or any power to be put forth, in order to determine or fix the nature of volitions which are already in existence; or to prescribe bounds and limits to them. Whatever is in existence, is beyond the reach of any power which denoteth sufficiency for the production of future event. There cannot be a more palpable impropriety, than to talk of having power over *present volitions*; either to produce or determine them; or in any measure alter or vary their real existence, so as to take away their praise-worthiness

praise-worthiness or viciousness, or in any degree lessen or magnify it.

2. Power implieth a connexion between the volitions of agents, and the event which is the object of volition. Whatever external action, or event, we find immediately taketh place, upon our willing or choosing it, we accustom ourselves to say, *is in our power*. It is difficult to conceive what idea men would convey by the expression of events *being in our power*, beside that of a constituted connexion between our voluntary exertions, and those events which are their objects, and upon which they terminate. Thus we say, men have a power to *run, walk, or write*, whenever these actions are connected with the election and preference of the mind, and immediately take place upon becoming the direct objects of our choice. But if any one is under such circumstances as that these actions do not come into existence and take place, immediately upon the choice and preference of his mind; they may, in that case, properly be said to be *out of his power*. When we say that any thing *is out of our power*, we mean to deny a connexion between the event, and that act or exertion of our minds, whereby we choose and prefer it. Yet,

3. Many things may, with propriety, be said to be *within our power*, which, nevertheless, do not *in fact* become the objects of our preference and choice. The actual exertion of the mind or will toward an object, is not essential to the idea of power, as the term is many times used. For if this were the case, men could not be said to have *power* for any thing, otherwise than *in the actual performance* of it. They could not be said to have power to *run, walk, or write*, otherwise than in actual running, walking and writing. But where we observe a constant connexion between certain mental exertions, and those outward events which are their objects; where we observe events come into existence in a particular relation to certain exertions of mind, choosing and preferring them, and following

following this choice and preference of mind, as effects do their causes ; this sufficiently authorizes us to say, that the events, thus connected with human choice and preference, are *in the power* of men, even though they are not now actually chosen and preferred.

4. Power, therefore, strictly speaking (wherein the idea conveyed by the term is distinct from volition itself, and from any thing which has moral desert *immediately* and *directly* predicable of it) is no more than a law of constant divine operation. It is nothing more than a divine constitution, or an established connexion between human volitions and certain external events. It is a law of nature (to use the common mode of expression) that walking or writing, for instance, shall usually take place upon a man's choice or preference. And where we find this establishment, it is sufficient to justify the assertion, that these events are in men's power. But to speak more philosophically, and according to strict truth, *It is agreeable to the manner of constant divine operation, for God to bring these events into existence in a connexion with the choice and preference of our minds ; and only in that way.* No one supposeth, that without divine aids and efficiency, men have power to write, walk, or any thing else. But when God has so constituted the world, and our make and frame ; or, when it is the law and manner of constant divine operation, that these events shall immediately take place upon our choosing them ; they are then *in our power*, as much as any thing *can be* in our power ; and as much as is necessary to our being either praised or blamed, for performing or neglecting them.

In these two definitions, I am humbly of opinion, are contained the whole of the idea of Power, as far as we have any necessary concern with the term, in our inquiries into moral agency and liberty.

Power must mean either *the fitness or adaptedness in things, to be the subjects of certain influences and effects ; or the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for*
that

that order and connexion of events which we behold: or, a connexion between the volitions of agents, and those outward events which are their direct and immediate objects. * In the former sense of the term, men may be said to have powers of will, understanding, &c. as they are subjects fitted for having such effects take place in them; or, as they are adapted to receive, or be the subjects of, that kind of influence which is the cause of human understanding and will. Thus the air is fitted for receiving that kind of influence, and being the subject of it, which is the cause of its being expanded or compressed: and on this ground we say the air hath a power of expansion and compression. In the latter sense of the term Power, men may be said to be endowed with it, in all those instances wherein there is an established connexion between present voluntary exertion, and those external actions and events which are its next and immediate objects. By *external action or event*, I mean any thing whatsoever, which is extrinsic of that *mental and voluntary exertion*, which chooseth and terminateth upon it. There is, doubtless, so near a relation of human volitions themselves, in many instances, to one another; and they take place in such a series, order and connexion with each other; that, in many cases, our own acts of will may in some sense be said to be in our power. This matter I will endeavour more particularly to explain presently.

To observe order, here seems to be the proper place to inquire, whether the idea of a self-origination of motion, or self-determining power, in men, is any where to be found within the *latter definition* of power.

A little attention will convince any one, that the power which is pleaded for, by Gentlemen on that side

G

of

* If any one imagines that the power which we attribute to the sun, of exhaling vapour; and to fire, of burning, &c. are not comprehended under either of the definitions of power which have been given; I am content that they should be made a distinct class, rather than dispute with any one about it. It must doubtless be acknowledged, however, that there is no proper efficiency either in the sun or the fire; nor are the powers of the sun and fire, strictly speaking, any thing more than the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for that order and connexion of events, which we behold, as expressed above.

of the question respecting power, can have no place under the *last* definition. The power which they contend for as being essential to moral agency and liberty, is something *antecedent* to all voluntary exertion, and is the proper *ground* and *cause* of it. The power which was last defined, is, sufficiency in *present voluntary exertion*, for some future *external event*. Of that power, voluntary exertion is the effect and fruit : of *this*, it is the *cause* of some other event ; and is considered only in relation to its effect, without any reference, one way or another, to its cause. The power for which Arminian divines are advocates, is, a power to *begin motion*, even internal motion or volition : this power relates only to the production of some *effect*, by a motion *already begun*. That is a power which lieth in something *antecedent* to voluntary exertion : this considereth voluntary exertion itself wholly as *cause*, and the ground of some external event or effect. In that, the dispute seems to be respecting the *cause* of voluntary exertion : in this, respecting the *efficiency* of voluntary exertion itself, as *cause* of some future, consequent event.

But it is quite unnecessary to carry the comparison any further, in order to illustrate the difference of these several kinds of power ; as it is probable that none of the advocates for a power of self-determination in men, will ever urge that the idea of that power which they contend for, is contained under this definition : or, indeed, under either of the definitions of the term power, which have as yet been given. If they should, Calvinistic divines, and such as are of opinion that all voluntary exertion *in creatures* ariseth from some cause extrinsic of themselves, will no longer pretend to maintain a controversy with them *relative to power* ; unless it be respecting the propriety of the terms they make use of to convey their ideas of the Powers of Mankind : and here they may, doubtless, manage one to great advantage.

If the fitness, or adaptedness, of any creature or thing

thing, to become the subject of some certain influence *from without* ; and, in consequence of that influence, to have *some certain effects appear in it* ; together, also, with the sufficiency which now actually appeareth in it for some *external consequent effect* : if; I say, these two definitions do not contain the whole of the idea of any power which can, with the least propriety, be predicated of any *mere creature* ; the advocates for a power of *self-determination* in men will open a new source of knowledge, by explaining those boasted powers of mankind, wherein, they urge, the *principal dignity* of human nature consisteth.

Should it be here said, that no one ever pretended to plead for any powers in human nature, over and above a *sufficiency in what now actually exists in a subject, for some future event* ; that the power they plead for is a *sufficiency in MEN for the production of volition*—this sufficiency lying in the power which is the *cause*, and volition itself being the *effect* : should such a plea as this be made, it would be quite deficient in answering the purposes for which it is urged ; and that, two ways :

1. It cannot rationally be supposed, that the Power in men, which is considered as the *cause* of volition, doth any thing, or is *effectual* to any thing, any other-wise than in *actual exercise*. To treat of any thing in the light and under the character of *cause*, and yet consider it as *doing nothing—exerting no influence*—is at once to divest it of all the qualities and ideas of a cause, and strip it naked of every thing on the account of which there is the least reason to apprehend any sufficiency in it, for any future, external event. For volition to be the effect of such a cause as this (could any such cause be conceived of) would be as utterly inconsistent with those ideas of Liberty which are pleaded for by the advocates for a power of self-determination in men, as any Necessity which can be conceived of or named. To urge that *volition* ariseth from such a cause as this, is to assign it an *involuntary* cause—

cause—one that is not *active*, but perfectly *passive*; which must necessarily, according to their ideas and definitions of it, utterly deprive it of all *freedom*.

2. If it should be supposed that this power produceth volition *by its exercise*, in order, still, to answer the purposes of the advocates for it; it must be presumed that the exercise is *voluntary* and *free*; otherwise, the volition which is its fruit and effect, upon their principles, cannot be free. But if the exercise of this power is *voluntary*, then that which is considered as the *cause* of volition, is *voluntary exertion*; which at once taketh away all its distinction from volition itself, and utterly confounds the *cause* with its *effect*.

It may in this place be proper to observe something respecting the *connexion* of human volitions one with another; as it may serve to give some fuller view and clearer idea of the nature of the *powers* under consideration. I beg the Reader's candid attention to the following observations.

1. It seems that God hath established a connexion in some cases between human volitions of a certain kind, in a continued series and succession; so that the whole chain, or series, shall arise out of that which is *original* in it; each successive volition growing, as it were, out of its next preceding one as its cause. This, indeed, is manifestly the case of all human volitions, as to their *genus*—that which denominates them either *morally good*, or *morally evil*. This establishment, *in those two grand points*, took place in the first of mankind. It was the appointment and constitution of God, that, if Adam retained his integrity, and persisted in innocency, through the proposed time of his trial, all human nature, which should afterward come into being, should be of the same general, excellent kind, viz. *holy*. It was God's law or constitution, on the other hand, if Adam fell, that human nature should all come into being *sinful*; and that it should always continue so, unless some *new and special dispensation and constitution* respecting the human race should be introduced. Adam,
in

in fact, did fall : this determined the point in respect to his posterity, that they should all come into the world *sinful*. To this divine establishment or constitution do the scriptures direct us to look, for the reason why mankind are now universally brought into existence in such a corrupt and fallen state.

2. Wherein there is such an established connexion taking place betwixt human volitions of a certain kind, *acts of will* may, in some sense, be said to be *in our power*. If there is a divine establishment, whereby it becometh certain, or is agreeable to the common, ~~first~~ law and method of divine operation, that the nature of our future volitions shall be determined by the present ; or, whereby it becometh certain that our future exercises of will shall be agreeable, in kind, to our present ; this brings our future exercises *in this respect* within our power. An *act of will*, which is connected with our present voluntary exercise, may as properly be said to be in our power, as any *outward event* standing in the same connexion. If outward events are said to be in our power, only because of their connexion with our exercises of will ; then any future volitions themselves, also, may be said to be in our power, as far as they stand in a similar connexion with present choice and exercises of will.

3. It therefore appeareth, that all those voluntary exercises and affections, which are required of us in the divine law, may be said to be *in our power*. There is no opposition to any obedience which is claimed by the divine law, except it be in our wills. This kind of opposition, in other matters, is never considered as taking away our power. Men are subjects capable of receiving those influences from without, which are the proper and direct *cause* of holy affections ; and are subjects properly fitted for having such effects appear in them. A continued series of holy exercises are, by divine constitution, certainly connected with the first and lowest degree of that kind of desire which we are called to in the gospel. This series of holy exercises
may

may therefore be said to be in our power ; and men may be said to have power to "make them new hearts," and "turn from their evil ways unto the Lord."

Nor doth such a representation of the matter in any measure remove the true ground of the necessity there is of divine and supernatural influences on the hearts of men, in order to their being brought, in any degree, to the true knowledge and love of God. Man is not possessed of an *independent power for any thing*. The concurrence and influence of an omnipotent power are, really, as essential to our moving a finger, or drawing a breath, as to our becoming true gospel penitents and believers : and yet we scruple not to say, that men have *power* to move and to breathe. So, because *special* divine influences and omnipotent power are absolutely necessary to any holy, right and spiritual exercises in the heart of a sinner ; there is no more reason, *on that account*, to deny it to be in the power of men to be holy, than there is to deny it to be in their power to move and breathe, *because* of a necessity of the concurrence of divine aids, to the actual taking place of the event. I therefore proceed to observe,

4. That this divine establishment, or constitution of things, whereby it becometh certain that the volitions of moral agents shall take place in a certain series and order, and be, in the manner before described, connected together, is all, I humbly conceive, that we can consistently mean by the terms Habit, and Temper, when they are intended to express any thing previous to voluntary exertion or inclination, and distinct from it. When we say, for instance, that it is the *nature* or *temper* of a man to be covetous, or profuse ; we mean only to express the connexion we apprehend there is between his *present covetings*, and *future avariciousness of inclination* ; or, the connexion there is between *present profusion*, and *future prodigality and dissipation*.

On

On this ground it is, or on account of the connexion we have usually observed between present exercises of volition, and future voluntary exertions of the same general nature and tenor, that we form a judgment of the *future* conduct of men, by their *present characters*; just as we form a judgment of future events, in the natural world, by what are commonly called the Laws of Nature, by which our material system is governed. But yet Philosophers allow, that what are commonly termed the Laws of Nature, respecting the material world, are, strictly speaking, no more than a fixt, established method of constant divine operation. It is, likewise, equally unquestionably true, respecting the *tempers* and *dispositions*, or *moral habits*, of mankind (which seem to be the general law according to which moral events take place) that they are no more than certain laws, or methods of constant divine operation. And this notwithstanding, it may as properly be said, that it is the *nature* of a wicked man to do wickedly, as it is the nature of a tree to bear its fruit, or of an acorn to produce an oak.

These observations, if just, may possibly afford some light into an event which hath generally been esteemed mysterious, and to be of difficult solution: I mean the Fall of our First Parents from their original state of perfection and purity, into a state of infinite ruin and guilt.

The few following observations upon this point are humbly submitted to the careful inquiry and candid examination of the intelligent Reader.

1. It appeareth, from the foregoing observations, that Adam *in innocency* had not a holy *temper*, or the *habit* of holiness. Such a temper, or habit, was to be gained by his own diligent endeavours, and a faithful improvement of the talents committed to him. This was to be the fruit of the exercise of his own *free will*. I would by no means be understood to intimate, that the original innocency of our first parents consisted in a mere *negation* of all moral evil: for, their first and original

original exercises were, doubtless, holy—positively virtuous and good. But *habit*, or *temper*, is formed by the establishment of a connexion between our *present* and our *future* exercises, and a kind of dependence of the latter on the former. And on account of such a connexion as this, which we generally observe to take place, it is, that the truth of that common observation is wholly founded, that “old habits are rarely overcome.” But such a fixt establishment and constitution, respecting the voluntary exercises of Adam’s mind, had not yet taken place: such an establishment being all the *confirmation* which he ever would have had in his *holy* and happy state, if he had retained his integrity, and persisted in innocency, through the proposed time of his trial.

Habit and Temper mean nothing more than a certain fixt connexion between our *present* exercises of will, and *future* voluntary exertions of the same general nature and denominations. Respecting Adam, it was the decree of God, that *one sinful* exercise should form a *temper*, or *habit*; such an exercise being certainly and infallibly connected with consequent sinful exercises and volitions. But, on the other hand, a holy *temper*, or the *habit* of holiness, was to be contracted and formed only by a *number* and *series* of holy exercises of soul. This consideration may, by the way, lead us to observe a difference in Adam’s state of trial, from that of any of his posterity—a difference in favour of the latter. Adam was to persist in obedience for a certain time, and have A NUMBER and series of holy exercises, before that fixt and certain connexion between *present* and *future* exercises of the same general nature and denomination, which we mean to express by the terms Habit and Temper, might take place. But it is now become a gracious constitution of God, and the subject of a promise to men, that Habit shall be formed by *one such exercise as we are called to in the gospel*: perseverance in holiness, and eternal life, being certainly and infallibly connected with the first and
lowest

lowest degree of hearty compliance with the proposals of the gospel.

2. It hence appeareth, that the first sin and fall of Adam were not in opposition to the *habit* and *temper* of his mind ; though this act was in direct opposition to all the *former moral exercises* of it. All that makes it so inconceivable to us, that any one should act and conduct in opposition to the *temper* and *habit* of his mind, is, the connexion we have observed invariably to take place (unless there is some manifest and special divine interposition to the contrary) between present exercises of will, and future voluntary exertions of the same general nature and denomination. If we had not been wont to find such a connexion in things, and so accustomed to look for and expect it ; it would appear nothing strange or surprising to us, to find in men a direct opposition between their *present* and *past* inclination and will ; or, to expect a like opposition in exercises to come. Were it not that our ideas and conceptions of things were turned into a particular channel, and formed, as it were, in a certain mould, by our observing such a connexion in human volitions, and such an invariable law of operation respecting their coming into existence ; there would appear nothing strange, nothing embarrassing, in the opinion, that men might turn alternately from sin to holiness, and from holiness to sin : as we see the matter in fact exemplified, in the case of our first parents, and those of their posterity who become true converts to the religion of Christ.

The fall of our first parents was an event inconsistent with such a connexion in things as hath been described ; and utterly irreconcilable with *habit* and *temper*, in this construction of the terms. But this difficulty will at once subside, if we recollect, that, in respect to Adam in innocency, there was no such connexion took place : he had no holy *habit* of mind, and *temper* of soul, to sin against and resist. And as to any difficulty arising from *temper*, it is no more inconceivable

ble how Adam should *sin*, than how he should *continue to be holy*. There is, I would beg leave to observe, no difficulty at all, respecting the fall of Adam from his original state of perfection and purity, into a state of sin and guilt, which is any ways *peculiar*, and doth not equally press the argument in general respecting the taking place of *any* sin, and the *admission* of it into God's world.

If, indeed, we would maintain a proper idea and suitable sense of the constant, immediate dependence of all creatures and things on God ; and would duly consider how utterly unconnected human volitions in themselves are, and in their own nature, abstractly considered, and aside from any *particular divine establishment and law of operation* respecting their taking place ; if these things, I say, were duly considered and kept in view, I must take liberty humbly to express it as my opinion, that we should not find ourselves so embarrassed and perplexed in the argument respecting Adam's original sin and fall.

But it is time to conclude the section on Power, and proceed to consider the doctrine of Motives ; which is a subject of importance in the present inquiry. This shall be the business of the next section.

S E C T. III.

Wherein the Nature and Influence of MOTIVES are carefully examined and explained.

THE use and application of the term MOTIVE, in moral essays and metaphysical disquisitions, is frequently such as tendeth to beget an apprehension in the Reader, that the *mind* is the *passive subject* of the influence of motives ; that there is something very nearly resembling an active power and agency in them, to produce effects on the mind ; or, at least, that they are the *means*, or instruments, whereby God *awakeneth* the

the mind into sensation, perception and choice. The human mind seems, many times, to be considered as being *moved* and *determined* by motives ; in the same manner as clocks and watches are moved and determined by weights and springs. It is apparent, that in these machines every degree of motion in the wheels is the *effect* of *antecedent* influence upon them, from the weights and springs. The spring of a watch puts forth and exerteth its influence, *previous* to the motion of any of its wheels ; and the motion of the wheels is wholly the *fruit* and *effect* of external influence. So, of a clock, and its weights. But in a sense similar to this it cannot, I believe, properly be said, the mind of man is *governed* by *motives*, and subject to their influence. Motives have no influence, otherwise than in their being actually perceived. They obtain the appellation of *motives*, only in the mind's *feeling* their influence, or being *in actual motion* in the view of them. And when the mind feels, or perceives, the influence of a motive ; it is then too late for the motive to *produce* effects on the mind—*exciting* it to motion, choice, or action ; the mind being already *moved*, the will *exerted*, toward some certain object ; and *choice* having gained existence. Motives, as being wholly unperceived, have no tendency to move the mind, or engage election ; and, as to the person unconscious of them, do not obtain that appellation. Beauty, for instance, so long as it is wholly unperceived, hath no tendency to produce love, and engage affection : it doth not, antecedent to its being perceived, exert any influence upon the mind, which exciteth it to motion and affection : when it *is* perceived, it is too late for it to exert influence upon the mind, in order to *excite* its choice ; it being *already relished*, and, of course, *chosen*. *In the mind's perceiving* any thing, which is fitted, by the nature and constitution of it, to be an object of its affection, is really all the choice which is ever made of it. Nothing that is, in its nature, the object of affection, is ever either chosen, or refused, with any

H 2

feeling,

feeling, exercise, or perception of mind, different from what is necessarily and certainly implied in the mind's *perceiving it*.

If it should be said, that the mind may perceive a *beautiful object*, and yet, by reason of the particular state or frame of the mind, have no relish of it ; and it should from hence be urged, that the perception of object or motive is antecedent to choice, and consequently is a perception which doth not necessarily imply choice and preference in it ; in answer to such an objection, I reply ; that, as the case is here stated, and under such circumstances, *beauty* is not, according to the common acceptation of the term, considered as being any motive, or having the influence of a motive, upon such a mind. Without all question, the mind may have some kind of perception of an object which is absolutely, in itself, beautiful ; and, at the same time, instead of relishing and choosing, have a great degree of disaffection and aversion to it. Yet it cannot properly be said, that the mind *perceiveth the beauty* of the object. For the mind to be affected by the motive of beauty, and perceive the influence of such a motive to love an object, is, in fact, to perceive the beauty of the object, or the very thing or quality in it, which the mind doth relish in its *choosing* it. And for the mind to have such a perception of the beauty of an object, is *all the choice* of the object which ever taketh place. The mind hath no perception relative to it, different from the *perception of its beauty*, which, with any propriety, can be called *choosing* it. There is no action of the mind towards it, beside what is necessarily included in the idea of the perception of its beauty. The perception of the beauty of an object may be the proper cause, or ground, of some *outward action* relative to it ; but it is not the cause and ground of *choice*, nor any thing distinct from it.

The case is exactly parallel, in regard to the mind's refusing and rejecting any thing. That which displeaseth and disgusteth the mind, is not first perceived, and,

and, in consequence of that perception, rejected : for a perception of the disgustful, displeasing quality, is all the action, motion, or perception, the mind ever feels, and of which it is ever conscious, in refusing and rejecting it.

It hence appeareth, that there is an utter impropriety in saying that the mind is *governed* and *determined by motive* ; if the expression is designed to represent motive as the *cause*, and choice or volition its *effect*. In the sense wherein it may truly be affirmed, of moral, intelligent beings, that they act in the view of motives, and are under the influence of motives ; that choice of mind and voluntary exercise which is, properly and in the most strict sense, *their action*, and the *influence of motives on their minds*, are by no means to be considered as sustaining that relative distinction which is conveyed by the terms *cause* and *effect*. To view the matter in such a light as this, would lead to evident inconsistency and confusion.

There are but two senses in which the term Motive is commonly made use of among men. In the first of these, it importeth the *very choice of the mind itself* : in the second, the *external object* or *quality* which doth, or ought to, terminate it, and which is exhibited as a reason, in the view of which the mind ought to act, either in choosing, or refusing.

I. The word Motive, as it is very frequently used in common conversation, importeth no more than some certain perception of the mind, and nothing different from the *real choice* and *exercise* of it. The word Motive is very often used to express the views and choice of the mind, in distinction from outward act, or object. It is more commonly used, I believe, in this sense, than in any other ; it being very rarely used in such a sense as to carry our thoughts back to the *cause* of choice or voluntary exertion. Usually where it is so applied as to lead the mind to consider *any thing* in relation to its *cause*, it is *outward action*. When *motive* is considered as *cause* or *antecedent*, its *correlative* is *outward action* Thus

Thus by the *motive of action* we most commonly mean that particular view, state or exercise of *mind*, which is the next and immediate cause or ground of outward action. In this sense we always use the word when we speak of inquiring into the *motives* of men, in order to judge of the nature of their actions ; or, rather, of their characters by their actions. It seems to be an established sentiment—a maxim among mankind—that nothing giveth moral denomination to outward actions, but the internal, mental views and disposition from whence they arise. On this ground it becometh a dictate of common sense, to inquire into the *motives* of the actions of men, and be well satisfied what *they* were, in order to form any certain judgment or determination concerning them : meaning, by *motives*, nothing prior to the acts and exercises of the mind, or distinct from them. Accordingly, the word Motive, as it is very frequently used among men, intendeth *mental exercise itself—voluntary exertion*. When it bringeth the idea of *cause* at all into view, it is in relation to *external action* as its effect.

II. The word Motive, when it is not used in the forementioned sense, denoteth the external object which doth, or ought to, engage the affection, and terminate the choice. Here it is used, neither for volition itself, nor for the cause of volition ; but merely for external object.

I. The word Motive, when it implieth something distinct from mental exercise—the internal disposition—is many times used to signify an object which *ought* to excite and engage the affections. Thus we speak of motives of interest, of hope, of fear, of friendship, &c. Here we mean *reasons* drawn from the consideration of interest, or friendship, which do, or ought to, engage our attention, and excite some affection : or, reasons and considerations adapted to influence hope, or fear. Which is as much as to say, that, in the view and consideration of certain reasons or truths exhibited to us, we commonly do, or ought to, *feel a concern*
for

for our own interest ; or, *exercise* hope, fear, friendship, &c. Or, which is the same thing, in the view and contemplation of some certain reasons and truths, we ought, and it would be suitable, to exercise hope ; in others, fear ; in others, friendship. In this sense we use the phrase, *The motives of the gospel* ; meaning only *the reasons exhibited in the gospel*, why men ought to forsake their sins, and turn unto God ; or, the considerations which do, or ought to, have the weight of reasons with us for turning unto God. The *motives* of the gospel mean the reasons there exhibited, why it is suitable and proper that we should forsake our sins, and become true penitents and believers. In the instances which have been mentioned, it is evident that the term *motive* expresseth and denoteth merely external object, without bringing the idea of *cause* at all into view. It is very manifest, that by the term *motive*, as applied in the forementioned cases, is not commonly understood *cause*. The *motives* held up to view in the gospel, to induce and persuade men to turn from sin to God, and the *cause* of the actual turning of men—or that efficiency which produceth this effect—are two quite different things. Multitudes have many of these reasons (*motives*) full in view ; and yet utterly refuse and neglect to return. So multitudes behold those reasons and objects, in the view of which it would become them to exercise hope, fear, friendship, &c. and yet this view is accompanied with none of these effects. The *cause* why men are influenced as they ought to be by *reasons* and *motives*, and the reasons and motives themselves in the view of which *they are influenced*, are quite two things, altogether different from each other. The *cause* of the mind's closing with reason and truth, is one thing ; the *reason* and *truth* with which it closeth, is another. The *cause* of voluntary exertion, is one thing ; and the *objects* in the view of which intelligencies do exert their wills, is another. The word *motive* is never used to denote the former ; but often, the latter. . It often meaneth the

the

the *reason* by which, or in the view of which, men ought to feel themselves biased and influenced ; but never the *cause* why they do, in fact, feel themselves influenced and biased *by reason*. Accordingly,

2. When we inquire upon what *motive* it is that any one chooseth or relisheth any particular object ; we mean, by the inquiry, only to know what certain quality it is, in a more complex and general object, which engageth the attention, and terminates the choice and affection. If it be inquired, for instance, upon what *motive* a man entertains an affection for a certain woman ; all that is sought for in the case, is the particular quality in, or belonging to, the object, which engageth the choice, and terminates the affection ; whether it is wit, beauty, virtue, or a good fortune. So, likewise, if we ask upon what *motives* a man preferreth a private life to a public ; we only mean to inquire, what are the particular objects, or circumstances, attending such a situation, which engage his choice and attention, and on account of which such a situation appeareth preferable to him. Accordingly, if the object relished or chosen is a simple idea, it would be esteemed quite impertinent to say any thing about *motive* one way or the other. Thus if any one should inquire of another why, or upon what *motive*, he relished the taste of an orange, or the smell of a rose, he would not be thought to deserve an answer : he might, with as much reason and propriety, inquire why the sky looks blue, or the sun bright.

These things I observe, to shew that the word Motive, as in common use among men, never importeth the *cause* of voluntary exertion—the *efficient reason* of its being brought into existence ; but always, either the volition—the voluntary exertion itself—or the object which terminates the will, and engageth the affection. When we inquire for the motive of *outward action*, the term always denoteth *volition*. When we inquire upon what motives a person *chooseth* this thing, or the other ; the sense of the word Motive is always confined to *outward object*. When

When we say, that the MIND never acteth without motive, or that there is never an *act of choice* without a motive; the sense of the word motive must be confined to external object. If we use the term, in this case, in the same sense in which we do when we are inquiring the reasons, or *motives*, of the outward conduct of men; it will lead to most manifest confusion. The *motive of outward action* is volition—internal, mental exertion. To say, therefore, that the *mind* never *acteth* or *chooseth* without a motive (the term still retaining the same sense which it doth when given as a reason, ground or spring of outward action) is the same as to say, that the mind never *acteth* or *chooseth*, unless when it is influenced thereto by its own action and choice; that is, that there is no action or choice of the mind, but such as hath its source, ground or spring in its own antecedent action and choice: which a little attention will shew to be ridiculous and absurd.

But if by the term Motive we mean external object, and say that there can be no act of choice without a motive, the assertion will undoubtedly be just. Choice and affection always imply object; they always terminate upon something. It is ridiculous to talk of choice without *motive*, in this sense of the term: this would be to suppose that the mind exerteth an act of choice, and yet chooseth nothing; that the mind chooseth, and yet nothing is chosen: that is, that the mind chooseth nothing, and consequently maketh no choice.

But having explained the term MOTIVE, and mentioned the several senses in which the word is used in common language among men, it may be proper to inquire, more particularly, what *influence* motives can have, in determining the volitions of men. The volitions of men are often represented as being under the *influence* of motives, and *determined* by them; and motives are treated of as *causes* of acts of the will. It will be impossible to judge what influence motives have in the taking place of human volition, and in *determining*

ing and *causing* acts of the will, without fully understanding, and fixing precisely, the meaning of the terms Cause, Influence, Determination, &c. as they are commonly made use of, relative to the present argument. For the better understanding of this matter, I would observe the following things.

1. That the *influence* of motives upon the minds of men, and the *efficient cause* of volition, are far from being one and the same thing. When we speak of voluntary exertion as being *under the influence* of motive, and acts of will as being *determined* by motive ; it is not to be understood, that we are treating of the *efficient cause* of volition, or that power and efficiency which *originates* the existence of such an event, and exerteth active, causal influence for the production of it. When we are treating of the *causes* of things, we generally use the term Cause in a more large and general sense ; rarely designing to treat of the *efficient reason* of their existence, or make that a subject of debate. Philosophers do not use the term in this sense, in their physical disquisitions and inquiries ; but make use of it to denote rather an *antecedent* or *occasion* of some certain event, than the efficient reason of its existence. When they use the term Cause in its most strict sense, as implying *efficiency* in it, and carrying the idea of active influence in the *production* of any event, in the natural world ; they ever refer to the Deity, the great first cause, whose constant efficiency and operation support all nature, and, agreeable to certain established rules and laws, by a constant efficiency and power produce that series of events which we constantly behold in the material world.

So, when we are inquiring into the *cause* of *moral events* ; if we use the term in so limited a sense as to include only the idea of *productive influence* and *efficiency*, it will be quite preposterous and insignificant to bring motives at all into view, or make any mention of them ; it being most obvious and plain, that they are not the *causes* of volition. When we are inquiring
into

into the *sources* of things, and the *cause* of their existence ; as in the natural, so in the moral world, we are compelled to resolve all into the divine disposal, and a certain law, or method, of constant divine agency and operation.* What are usually termed *secondary causes*, have no productive efficiency and energy in them. And when we speak of things, in the natural world, as *acting* on each other, we use the term in an indirect and figurative sense ; not supposing that there is any *action*, in the most strict sense, any where but in one who is properly *an agent*, and who *exerts influence*, and *putteth forth efficiency*, for the production of some event. To represent motives as the *causes* of volition, in the strict and proper sense of the term, would be at once to invest them with agency, and make them moral beings. When, therefore, we consider motives as the causes of acts of the will, the idea of active energy and efficiency must be carefully excluded from the expression ; otherwise it will betray us into manifest error and confusion.

Whenever the will is said to be *governed* by motives, and motives are represented as the *cause* of volition ; the word *cause*, it must be carefully remembered, implieth nothing more than an *occasion* of the event ; or, something essential to the event, and without which it could not be what it is. In this sense motives may be said to be the causes of volition, and the will to be under the government of motives. Thus, something in snow, which occasions that particular appearance, is the *cause* of its whiteness ; and the roundness and smoothness of its particles, the *cause* of the fluidity of water. It is very manifest that the word *Cause*, in these instances, denoteth nothing of

I 2

efficiency ;

* Dr. Taylor seemeth to be of this opinion, when he saith, " I do not know " that we derive any thing at all from Adam, *but by the will and operation of* " God—no more than the *acorn* deriveth from the *oak*. It is, I judge, a great " though common fallacy, to suppose that something is infused into the human " nature, absolutely independent of ourselves, and *not from the will of God.*" (See Scrip. Doc. &c. p. 187.) And again, " No changes can happen in our " constitution, without either *the appointment, or immediate operation, of God.*" p. 191.

efficiency ; but only something *essential* to the whiteness of snow, and the fluidity of water.

In a sense analogous to this, the *agreeable appearance* of any thing may be said to be the *cause* of our choosing it ; and the perception of something *disagreeable*, the *cause* of our dislike and aversion. And thus the will may be said to be *as the greatest apparent good is* ; just as the fluidity of water may be said to be *as the smoothness and roundness of its particles are* ; or, the solidity and hardness of any thing, *as the closeness, cohesion or fixedness of its parts*. But to say, that agreeable and disagreeable appearances are the *efficient* reason and cause of volition, would be as far from being true, as that the smoothness and rotundity of the particles of water have efficiency in them to *produce* fluidity and fluctuation ; or, that nearness and fixedness of parts have efficiency to produce solidity and hardness as their *effect*. An agreeable appearance to the mind, is no more distinct from choice, than a fixedness and cohesion of parts is distinct from solidity. Agreeable and disagreeable appearances and perceptions are essential ingredients in choice and aversion. Nothing is ever chosen, otherwise than as being agreeable ; or refused, otherwise than as being disagreeable. This being the case, we have accustomed ourselves to speak of an agreeable appearance, as the *cause* of choice ; and a disagreeable appearance, as the *cause* of aversion.

2. When we speak of the *determination of the will*, there is equal need of care and caution that we do not bring into view the idea of productive, causal efficiency and influence. That may be said to determine the will, which is the occasion, or reason, of its being as it is and not otherwise. The will is determined by motive, as sight is determined by object, and hearing by sound. Thus, the paper before me *determines* my sight ; and the sound which now saluteth my ears, my hearing. Yet that particular perception, or sight, which I have when I look upon the paper before me, is not, properly speaking, *caused* by the *perception* of
this

this object, or its sensibly striking my eye; nor is my hearing *caused* by the sound which saluteth me: and yet ~~my~~ present sight may properly be said to be determined by the paper before me; and my hearing, by the sound which strikes and salutes me. In a sense similar to this, volition may be said to be *excited* by motive, and the will *determined* by it.

It may, also, agreeable to the sense in which the term is frequently used, be properly said, that motives have *influence* in determining the will. In complex objects, every simple idea hath *influence* in determining their nature. In mixt colours every ingredient hath influence in determining the shade. Yet every simple, of which the compound is made, hath its influence only in being blended with the others, and, as it were, by incorporating with them. So motives have *influence* in *determining* the will; and yet they have no influence any otherwise than *in being perceived*: for it is in *their being perceived* that they *determine* volition to be as it is, and not otherwise. This, I think, must be the sense in which *motives* may be said to have *influence* in *determining* the will.

3. Motives may be said, in some sense, to have a *tendency* to excite volition, and engage affection. But whenever this is affirmed of *motives*, the term must be used only for external object: for nothing is more manifest, than that motives (external objects) have no degree of *active* efficiency and influence upon the mind to *produce* volition; nor *any* influence, otherwise than in being perceived. The will feels the tendency of a motive to engage its choice, *in actual choosing*; as bodies feel (if I may so say) their mutual tendency to each other, only in being attracted and drawn. There is a foundation, in the nature of things, or in the law of divine operation, for all material things to unite with one another. This foundation for this natural union, we call *tendency*. This tendency is in every atom in the whole system. Yet we may conceive two different atoms placed at such an almost infinite distance,
the

the one from the other, as to have no degree of perceptible, discernible influence, upon each other. And though in their present situation, and remote distance from each other, no sensible effect of this tendency to each other appeareth; there is, nevertheless, the same foundation in these atoms, or minute particles of matter, for producing discernible effects upon one another, upon their being brought within the sphere of each other's attraction, as there is in any two particles of matter in the system, however nearly placed the one to the other. This adaptedness in material things to produce effects upon each other, is commonly termed *tendency*; though it is nothing more, strictly speaking, than the foundation there is, in a certain law of constant, divine operation, for the taking place and coming into existence of such particular events and effects.

So, also, it may with equal propriety be observed of any particular kind of *food* or *fruit* which we never tasted, or saw—that it is impossible it should have any influence in pleasing the palate, or gratifying the appetite, otherwise than *in being actually tasted and relished*. The savour of food, or fruit, can have no influence in determining our love to it, otherwise than *in being perceived*: for, *in perceiving* the taste or savour of food or fruit, *is* all the love or hatred to either, which ever taketh place. But, this notwithstanding, there is something in the nature of certain kinds of food and fruit—something in the shape, size, smoothness or roughness and arrangement of the parts, or in the tone of the stomach, or texture of the palate—which lays a foundation for our *relishing* the food, or fruit, as soon as they are tasted, and the savour of them is known. The foundation there is in the nature of things, under certain circumstances, for this effect, is what I mean to express by the word *Tendency*, as I here use the term.

This tendency may be predicated with equal propriety, both of the palate, and of the food, or fruit.

There

There is no more tendency in the food, or fruit, to please the palate, than there is in the palate to *be pleased* with the food, or fruit : as there is no more tendency in the earth to attract the bodies which surround it, than there is in surrounding bodies to *be attracted* by it.

These observations may serve to illustrate the meaning of the term Tendency, when applied to *motives* in their relation to volition, and previous to any perception the mind hath of them. No tendency of motives to volition is perceived and felt, otherwise than in the actual taking place and exertion of choice. Yet there is a foundation in the nature of things, arising from some certain quality in objects, and from the particular state, temper and complexion of the mind, for their being *chosen* whenever they shall be known and perceived, and as soon as they shall come into the view of the mind. Or, to speak more agreeably to strict, philosophic truth ; it is agreeable to the constitution of God, and the law of constant divine operation, that such particular effects should invariably take place under such certain circumstances, and come into existence in such a particular series, connexion and order. This foundation which there is in motives for engaging the choice and election of the mind, or in the mind itself for having its choice and election *engaged* by such objects, is what we often mean to express by the term TENDENCY, as applied both to the mind itself, and to motives—external objects.

In this sense only must the word be used, when we say there is a *tendency* in motives to *excite* volition ; or, a *tendency* in the mind to have volition *excited* by motives. There is no other tendency than this in motives, *while unperceived*, to excite the will to motion and action : and to affirm any other, will not comport with the strict truth of things. But such a tendency as this, in motives, to volition, and in the will to be *influenced* by motives, may doubtless be with truth affirmed. And so strong and insuperable are these

these mutual tendencies of motives, and the will of moral beings, to each other ; and so inseparable the connexion between the influence of the former, and the exertions of the latter ; that no object, with qualities suited to the state, temper and disposition of the mind, ever cometh into *its* view without being actually chosen. Such an object is no sooner apprehended and perceived by the mind, than it is relished and chosen. And such was the antecedent state and disposition of the mind, and such the adaptedness of the object with its qualities to that particular state and temper of mind, as to lay a foundation for choice, and be a ground of the certainty of it, whenever the object shall come within the view of the mind.

These observations may serve to shew, in what sense the human will may be said to be *governed* and *determined* by *motives*, and how the exertions of it are under *their* influence. And it from hence appeareth, that motives are never to have causal influence and efficiency attributed to them ; nor to be considered as *causes* in any other view than as being *essential* to the exercises of human will and affection. If these things were properly considered, and kept in view, I am humbly of opinion, that we should not find the appearance of such inconsistency and absurdity in what Mr. Edwards hath said upon the nature and influence of motives in determining the volitions of moral agents, as the Author of the Examination of his Inquiry on Freedom of Will, would persuade the public to believe may be fastened upon him.

It is often said, that the brute creation are governed by *instinct* ; mankind—rational, moral agents—by *motives*. By these expressions, as in common use among men, we mean no more than to distinguish the different causes of the *outward actions* of men, from those of the beasts. We are greatly in the dark as to the particular law of operation, under the influence of which the actions of the brutal part of our world take place. But finding it very distinguishable from that under the
operation

operation and influence of which trees and plants thrive and flourish, and apparently of a nature far superior to it; and yet much inferior to the moral habits of mankind; we have given it the name of *instinct*, without affixing any very distinct, determinate ideas to the term. However, we can certainly mean nothing more by it, than, in general, that law of operation, under the influence of which the motions we behold in them take place.

When we speak of the laws of *our* nature, we are under better advantages for affixing distinct, determinate ideas to the expression. Here we have our own feelings and perceptions to guide our inquiries. When we say, that moral, intelligent beings are governed by *motives*; meaning by the expression to intimate the law of *their* nature, under the influence of which their *actions*—what is visible to others—take place; we have the concurring sense and universal feelings of mankind, to illustrate and give significancy to the expression. When we say, that rational beings are governed by motives, and their *actions* are the fruit of their influence; the most natural and obvious meaning of the expression is, that their conduct, their actions, are the fruit of voluntary choice and design. The conduct and actions of beasts are the fruit of a certain law of their natures, which we term *instinct*: the conduct of men, the fruit of free, voluntary election. But, that this voluntary design and choice, which are the cause and ground of outward action, are themselves also the effect of voluntary design and choice; that the free, voluntary election of the mind, from whence outward actions proceed, are themselves also the effect of the free, voluntary election of *the same mind*; is what never entereth the thoughts of the vulgar; being a refinement upon metaphysics and common sense, for which we are indebted to that uncommon freedom of thought and inquiry, which hath greatly prevailed in these latter ages of the world.

When we say, that mankind *are governed by motives*;

K

the

the original, natural meaning of the expression is, that their (outward) conduct is under the influence of free, voluntary design, and the fruit of it. But it no more leads us to apprehend, that this intelligent, voluntary design is itself the fruit and effect of voluntary design *in the same being*, than the expression, that the wheels of a watch are under the government of springs, leadeth us to imagine that the elastic power of the spring, which acteth immediately upon the wheels, is also the effect of some *other* elastic power and force.

In judging of the moral quality of actions, mankind never carry their inquiries farther back than to the internal, voluntary design of the agent. When this is formed, we have all the ground to form a judgment upon, that is ever desired. Mankind evidently stand in need of some mark, or period, within which to bound and limit their inquiries into the morality of actions. The universal sense of men hath marked *intelligent design*—free, voluntary election—as this period; being the utmost limit of all reasonable inquiry after *cause*, in order to determine the *characters* of men, and the *morality* of actions.

When, therefore, we say, that intelligent, moral beings are governed by motives; we usually mean to distinguish the next immediate cause of *human actions*, from the cause of other visible effects which take place in the inferior works of creation—the natural world: The expression importeth, that the former are the fruit of choice—of free, voluntary design; but that the latter arise out of some certain law of divine operation, without *any design whatever*, or any intention any where, except in him who established such a law of operation, and gave energy and efficiency to it.

These observations, I am humbly of opinion, make it manifest, that the inquiry concerning motives, according to the use of the term in common language, never carrieth the mind farther back than to the *nature* of volitions—the real voluntary design and purpose of the heart. What is the ground and *efficient cause*

cause of volition, is a subject which falleth under an entirely different head of inquiry. What the *cause* of volition is, may, perhaps, be a subject worthy of attention, and fit to employ the talents of inquisitive, contemplative minds : but this is a subject which by no means belongeth to the inquiry concerning moral liberty and agency, which has so long engaged the geniuses and pens both of the advocates for, and opposers of, the free, sovereign and glorious grace of God.

S E C T. IV.

Wherein Virtue and Vice are shown to consist in the Nature of the internal dispositions and inclinations of men, in distinction from their Cause.

IT is a sentiment very obnoxious to many, that the essence of virtue and vice consisteth in the *nature* of dispositions and inclinations, and not in their *cause*. The Author of the Examination of the late President Edwards's Inquiry, &c. appears to be particularly dissatisfied with it ; and treats Mr. Edwards's argument upon this subject with contempt. He speaks of it as matter of surprise to him, to find a Gentleman of Mr. Edwards's abilities " using so weak an argument, descending to so thin a subtilty as this, that the essence of virtue and vice is not in their *cause*, but in their *nature*." (p. 50.) And saith, that " nothing can be more futile than the evasion, that the essence of virtue and vice lies in the *nature* of volition." (p. 66.) It might have been expected of a Gentleman of penetration and discernment, that he would have exposed the *subtil sophistry* of Mr. Edwards's argument on this subject, and removed the *thin veil* which covereth it, that it might appear in its own native *weakness* and *futility*. But the Ex——r, as it appears to me, hath made use of no argument to confute this position of Mr. Edwards, but what that Author had sufficiently

and refuted in that section wherein he particularly handleth the subject.

But whether it be an opinion agreeable to reason and common sense, that the virtue and vice of man's internal dispositions and inclinations consist in the *nature* of those dispositions and inclinations themselves, in distinction from their *cause*, I propose to make the subject of particular and careful examination, in the present section.

And "as no authority can be of equal weight to" establish "this position as the Author's own, we beg the Reader would consider the following passages ; "which are so full to our purpose, that we are saved "the trouble" of so long and laboured a proof of the point, as might otherwise be thought necessary. He tells us (p. 31.) that "all moral good, or evil, consists in the DISPOSITION or STATE of the mind, or "will." He saith, and foundeth an argument upon it, (p. 46.) "that wickedness lies in the STATE of the "will." And in p. 49, he speaks of acts of the will as ODIIOUS "IN THEIR OWN NATURE." In p. 96, our Author placeth wickedness in the person's DESIGN and INTENTION. And in the following page speaks of a *willing or unwilling mind, as the object of approbation, or the contrary*. And, more than all this, our Author says, (p. 65.) "For he (Mr. Edwards) *very justly* observes, that the ESSENCE of *all moral good* "or evil lies in the internal inclinations, dispositions, "volitions." And lower down, on the same page, "That vice and virtue lie in the *state or frame* of the "soul, and in this only." What could he have said more direct and full to the present case ? If *all moral evil* consisteth in the *disposition or state of the mind or will* ; then *none of it* consisteth in the *cause* of the disposition, or state of the mind. And, if acts of the will are *odious in their own nature* ; the odiousness of acts of the will doth not lie in their *cause*. If wickedness lies in the *state* of "the will," it doth not lie in the *cause* of this state. And if it is *with justice* that

Mr.

Mr. Edwards observes, that the *essence* of all moral good and evil lies in the internal inclinations, &c. then the essence of none of it lieth in their cause. Upon these principles there is nothing more manifest, than that virtue and vice consist in the *nature* of the dispositions and inclinations of men, in distinction from their *cause*. But, if it were only allowed, that *some degree* of virtue, or vice, is to be found in the *volitions* of men, considered as abstracted from their *cause*; this would sufficiently prove, that virtue and vice are not *inconsistent* with a certain, infallible connexion in things; and, that it is by no means essential to the ideas of virtue and vice, that they should be utterly unconnected with all antecedent ground, reason or cause of their existence. But it is not only allowed, by our Author, that there may be *some degree* of virtue and vice in voluntary exercises themselves; but it is insisted, that this is the very seat of virtue and vice; *acts* of the will being *odious in their own nature*; and that “all moral good and evil consist in the disposition or state of the mind, or will.” In this full and express manner doth our Author give his opinion in favour of the argument under consideration; though in Mr. Edwards he styleth it “a thin subtilty, a futile evasion.”

There are other things in our Author, which, by fair deduction, incontestibly prove the point under consideration; and do most certainly shew, that the essence of virtue and vice is not in their *cause*, but in their *nature*. Yea, the leading sentiments of his whole book—the principal point in which all his arguments centre—taketh for granted this very sentiment, and must immediately lose all support, if this opinion and principle fail. Our Author very strenuously contendeth, that a power of *self-determination* in men, and of *originating* motion in themselves, is essential to moral agency and liberty:—that acts of the will must be *self-originated*, in order to have moral quality predicable of them. And he speaks of it as
being

being most unreasonable to suppose, that "mere effects should be thought virtuous, or vicious, and "not the cause that produced them;" or, that the *passive effect* could have another "and distinct wickedness from that of its cause." (p. 66.) According to our Author, nothing can be more absurd and irrational than to suppose the exercises of the will, or voluntary exertions, in men, to be the fruit of any external influence and cause, *for this very reason*, that such a supposition would be quite inconsistent with the opinion that voluntary exertions are either virtuous, or vicious. To suppose that they arose from the influence of any external cause, would, in his view, immediately strip them of all moral quality, and render exercises of will unfit objects of either praise or blame. So essential is it, in his view, to the virtuousness and viciousness of the exercises of the will, that they should be utterly unconnected with antecedent, extrinsic cause.

But if these things are so, can any thing be more absurd than to seek for the essence of virtue and vice in their *cause*? Our Author insisteth, that all virtue and vice consist in the *state* and *disposition* of the mind; and that *acts of will* may be odious in *their own nature*; and not only so, but that it is *essential* to their being either virtuous or vicious, that they should be of such a peculiar nature as to need the assistance of no extrinsic cause in order to their gaining existence. Can any thing more infallibly and beyond all contradiction prove that the essence of virtue and vice doth certainly consist, not in their cause, but in their nature? That the virtue and vice of *volitions* should lie in their *cause*, is so far from being true, *upon our Author's principles*, that it is utterly inconsistent with all ideas of their being *either virtuous or vicious*, to suppose that they have any connexion whatsoever with *any* antecedent cause.

If it should be urged, that moral evil and deformity are not properly and directly predicable of *volitions themselves*,

themselves, but of *man* exercising and putting forth acts of will ; this would still suppose the essence of virtue and vice to consist, not in their cause, but in their nature. For our Author urgeth, that man, in his voluntary exertions, is not the subject of any external influence ; and *as to that exertion* which is deemed either virtuous or vicious, is to be considered as unconnected with all cause. The vice or virtue, therefore, which is predicated of the MAN, in the *exercises of his will*, is to be sought *in the man exercising and putting forth acts of will* ; and not in any thing which is a *cause*, whereof *man exercising and putting forth acts of will* is the effect.

But that there can be no reason or consistency in placing the virtue and vice of the internal dispositions and inclinations of men in any thing distinct from the dispositions or inclinations themselves, may be farther and still more clearly argued from the following considerations.

I. If the virtue and vice of the voluntary exercises and internal inclinations of men, do not consist in these exercises and inclinations themselves, they do not consist in any thing. Whatever virtue or vice there may be *in other things*, it is not the virtue or vice of the *exercises of the will*. If *exercises of the will* are virtuous or vicious, *that virtue or vice* must not be found *in these exercises*, and be predicated of them. If there can be found nothing, either virtuous or vicious, in the nature of voluntary exercise ; it is certain that voluntary exercise is improperly made the *subject*, of which moral quality, either virtue or vice, is the *predicate*. If virtue and vice are not to be sought in the things deemed virtuous and vicious, they are, of course, not to be sought in *any thing*. If we must still be referred to the *cause* of that which appeareth to us to be either beautiful or deformed, it is a plain case that we never shall come to the *thing itself* which is, *in its own nature*, morally beautiful or deformed—and for this very obvious reason, viz. That *nothing* is so,
in

in *its own nature* ; but only in *its cause*. What can be more obvious than that, upon these principles, the discovery of the true nature of virtue and vice doth, and ever must, flee before the inquirer, as fast as he can pursue. When he hath carried his inquiries to ever so great a length, he is no nearer a discovery than when he first entered upon the subject. Like our own shadow, it escapeth us as fast as we can pursue. The grand object of pursuit, however seemingly near and within our reach, still eludes our grasp, and ever will ; and nothing, on this supposition, can be more idle and fruitless than to make an inquiry like this the object of pursuit.

There is, indeed, a most palpable absurdity and inconsistency in representing the quality of any thing to consist, not in the *nature* of the thing itself, but in its *cause*. To speak of the virtue and vice of *voluntary inclinations* and *exertions*, not as consisting in the inclinations and exertions themselves, but in something else quite distinct from them, is to talk unintelligibly, and without meaning. How is it possible for any one, from such representations as these, to determine where virtue or vice is ; or to form any manner of idea or conception of any such quality, or know that there ever was, or is, or can be, any such thing ? We may with as much propriety say, that the colour of a piece of cloth consists in the dyer ; or, that the perfume of ointment is in the apothecary. We may as well say, that the sourness of grapes consisteth in the vine that bore them ; or, the putrefaction of a carcase, in the air which occasioned it. I may appeal to any one, whether it is possible for us ever to apprehend *his* ideas of *colour* and *perfume*, *who* speaks of them as consisting in the dyer and the apothecary ; or, of sourness and putrefaction, *who* represents them as being in the vine, or in the air which surroundeth us. As impossible will it be, I may venture to assert, ever to get *his* ideas of moral beauty and deformity, and comprehend *his* meaning of the terms, *who* representeth the virtuousness

tuousness and viciousness of *voluntary exertions* and *internal dispositions*, as consisting, not in the dispositions themselves, but in their *cause*.

II. To place the essence of virtue and vice, not in their *nature*, but in their *cause*, excludeth all possibility of sin ; and denies it to be conceivable that any such event should ever take place. According to this argument, whatever *hath* a cause, cannot be sinful ; for the sinfulness of any thing lieth, not in the *nature* of it, but in its cause. That which *hath not* a cause, but is self-existent, cannot be sinful, for *this* as well as other reasons, that sinfulness doth not lie in the *nature* of things, but in their *cause*. But *this*, by the supposition, having nothing but its *nature*, or what is to be found in the *nature* of it, predicable of it ; it being itself without cause ; can for *this reason* have no vice charged to its account. That which is an *effect* cannot be vicious, because the viciousness of any thing is to be charged to its *cause*. That which is only a *cause*, being in no respects the effect of any thing else, cannot be sinful : “ For nothing can be more futile than the evasion, that the essence of virtue and vice consists in their *nature*, not in their *cause*.” What can be more manifest than that, according to such a method of reasoning, it is absolutely impossible there ever should be any such thing as sin.

Besides : If the evil of sin lieth in its cause, this supposeth that it *hath a cause* ; and *that*, such an one as is extrinsic of itself. To represent the cause of volition as something which is contained in volition itself, and not extrinsic of it, is utterly to confound *cause* and *effect*, and to destroy that relative distinction which really subsisteth between them. Therefore, I say, to speak of the evil of volition as lying in its cause, supposeth that it hath a cause out of itself ; and that it came into existence by the influence and operation of that cause. On this hypothesis, therefore, I would inquire, where we are to find the evil of the *first sin* that ever took place ? by the supposition the *first sin* had a

L

cause,

cause, and that such an one as *was out of itself*. Yet this *cause* of the *first sin* could not be sinful: this would be a contradiction in terms. Nor could its *effect* be sinful, because it did not proceed from a *sinful cause*: —a consideration essential to the evil of any thing, in the view of those Gentlemen who are advocates for that notion of Freedom which I mean to oppose. According to their definitions, neither *cause* nor *effect* could possibly be sinful. Yet, it being an incontestible fact, that there was a *first sin*; and, according to these Gentlemen, it being essential to the very *being* of it, that it should arise out of *some cause*; how can it be but that it arose out of the great FIRST CAUSE, and from his energy and efficiency?

Thus do their notions, that the evil of sin ariseth altogether from its *cause* and consisteth in *the cause*, as necessarily and palpably make God the author and efficient cause of sin, as any of those obnoxious doctrines that were ever advanced by the most rigid fatalist that ever wrote.

When our Author termeth Mr. Edwards's observation, that "the essence of virtue and vice is in their *nature*, not in their *cause*," a *weak argument*, *thin subtilty*, &c. I am at a loss to know whether he meaneth, in reference to the *truth* of the proposition, or the *pertinency* of it to *his* general argument. If the Ex—r speaks in reference to the *truth* of the observation, when he calleth it "a weak argument, thin subtilty," &c. he ought, at least, to have taken some notice of the reasons upon which Mr. Edwards groundeth his assertion. But since he hath not, the critical reader will perhaps think that *he*, not Mr. Edwards, useth *weak arguments*, *descendeth to thin subtilties*. So far is he from justifying his opposition to Mr. Edwards in this point, that he hath; repeatedly, fully and expressly, asserted the same thing; as I have already shown.

If our Author treats this argument of Mr. Edwards's with contempt, because he imagines it *impertinent* to that Author's general argument, I cannot think that he doth it justice.

When

When it is urged by Objectors, that it is inconsistent with the virtuousness, or viciousness, of internal dispositions and inclinations, to suppose that they should proceed from some antecedent cause with which their existence was connected ; and, that the connexion of volition with any antecedent cause, ground, or reason, of its existence, is inconsistent with all ideas of its having moral quality, either virtue or vice, predicable of it : when, I say, such an objection as this is urged against that infallible certainty and connexion in things, which Mr. Edwards was endeavoring to illustrate and prove ; could any thing be more natural, more pertinent to his argument, than to shew that the virtue and vice of volitions consist, not in the *cause* or *antecedent ground* of these volitions, but in the *nature* of them ? Every impartial reader must see that *such a reply*, to *such an objection*, could not be impertinent. I cannot but think that the Ex—r himself, upon a review of the matter, will be convinced that he hath not herein done justice to Mr. Edwards.

But let us attend to our Author's reasoning and objections on this head, and see if there is any weight in them.

He urgeth (p. 66.) that there is as much reason to suppose that *volitions* partake of moral good and evil, with reference *only* to their cause ; as that mere bodily, outward actions should be esteemed, either morally good or evil, *only* in relation to *their* cause. These are not just his own words ; but, as far as I can judge, contain the true sense of his argument. In reply to it, I would observe,

1. That outward actions and bodily motions are never, themselves, esteemed to be, either virtuous, or vicious. The E—r's argument is founded on a supposition, that *outward actions*, as well as the internal dispositions from whence they proceed, are morally virtuous or vicious : that, over and above the moral virtue and vice there are in the internal exercises and dispositions, there is something properly worthy of

esteem or disapprobation, in those *outward actions*, which are their fruits and effects. On any other supposition it must appear impertinent to ask, as he doth, on the last cited page, "Why outward acts are declared virtuous or vicious only with reference to their cause, while this is denied of volition?" Whereas the truth is, that outward actions are not declared virtuous or vicious *at all*, in a direct sense; but are considered merely as fruits and indications of something which is, in the proper sense, virtue or vice. We have no proper *indices* of the moral characters of men, beside their *outward actions*. And as it is by these alone that we form our judgment of men, we have accustomed ourselves to speak of outward actions as being morally good, or bad; when, at the same time, we mean to consider them only as marks of moral qualities, which in a direct sense are either virtuous or vicious. But this subject hath been very accurately and particularly handled by Mr. Edwards himself, in that section of his book which he wrote expressly upon the sentiment under consideration. And I do not see how our Author could expect any weight to be laid upon *his own arguments*, until he had fairly answered what Mr. Edwards had said in defence of *his*.

2. This being the case of *outward actions*—whatever is visible to men, we are necessitated, when we are examining for moral beauty or deformity, to look back to *their cause*—something not obvious to our senses. But if it was a dictate of natural reason, that there is any degree of moral good or evil, beauty or deformity, *in the outward actions themselves*; we should have no occasion to inquire into the cause of even *outward actions*, or bring it at all into view, in forming our opinion of the virtuousness or viciousness of them. If outward actions were as truly of a moral nature, as internal exercises; there would be no more reason in examining the *cause* of the former, than of the latter, in order to determine the *quality* of them.

In order to determine the moral evil of *volitions*, we
never

never need make any inquiry concerning their cause. If the evil of the *cause* is sought, it will be then necessary to examine the cause. But in order to judge of the evil of the *effect*, nothing beside the effect need come under our observation. To say that we cannot judge of the moral evil of volition, without knowing and being acquainted with its cause, is as perfectly absurd as to say that we cannot judge of the shape and sitting of a garment without knowing the taylor who made it ; or, of the beauty of a piece of embroidery, without knowing the lady who wrought it.

Our Author (in p. 50.) attempts to confute Mr. Edwards out of his own mouth. In order to it, he quotes what that Author says to prove that all events which come into existence have an answerable cause, and that their existence is certainly connected with their cause. In treating this argument, Mr. Edwards had said (p. 62. edit. 3.) that "there cannot be more in the effect, than in the cause." His meaning evidently is, that every cause is adequate to the *production* of whatever appeareth in its effect ; and that, in this sense, there cannot be more in the effect, than there is in its cause :—That, as it is a dictate of common sense, that no event can come into existence without a cause ; so it is equally a dictate of the same common sense of men, that every event, or effect, must arise from a cause which hath a sufficiency in it for the production of that effect of which it is the cause. But from this position it is by no means a consequence, that *volition* cannot be virtuous or vicious, farther than the cause of it is virtuous or vicious.

Mr. Edwards likewise hath allowed, that "it may be wickedness in the cause, that it produces wickedness." Our Author inferreth as a consequence from this concession, "that in every sinful volition there are two wickednesses." But he is certainly here too hasty in his conclusion : because there *may be* a wicked *cause* of wickedness, it doth not from thence necessarily follow, that the cause of every wickedness is itself also wicked.

wicked. All good and evil, virtuous and vicious, actions of men, have an occasion of their coming into existence. Yet we do not commonly argue the goodness or badness of the occasion, from the virtue or wickedness of the fact; but suppose that, many times, something truly good and virtuous may be *occasioned* by that which is evil; and, on the other hand, something bad—morally evil—by that which is *good*: or, that moral good, or evil, may be *occasioned* by that which is neither evil, nor good.

Our Author takes it for granted, that effects and causes have such a relation to one another, and that there is so near and intimate an union subsisting between them, as that they must necessarily participate of the moral qualities of each other. On the strength of this supposition he very peremptorily censureth Mr. Edwards for maintaining this position, “That all virtue and vice consist in the *nature*, not the *cause* of things;” and treats his argument as being contemptible and weak. Whereas, in truth, a wicked effect is no more a proof of a wicked or sinful cause, than a necessary effect is a proof that its cause is necessary. It is no more certain, in the nature of things, that the effect which is the production of a *virtuous cause*, will also be itself *virtuous*; than that the effect which is the production of a *voluntary cause*, will be also itself *voluntary*. This is the reasoning of one whom our Author (p. 48. marg.) quotes with approbation. If he had kept it in view until he had got two pages forward, it might have saved him the trouble of several things which he hath there been at the pains of writing.

Upon the whole, I think it must very manifestly appear to every careful, attentive inquirer, that all the virtue and vice of the internal dispositions and inclinations of men, is, and must of necessity be, sought for and found, in the dispositions and inclinations themselves; and that nothing can be more absurd and unintelligible than to represent the quality of any thing, not as being in the thing itself, of which it is a quality,
but

but in something else entirely distinct from it. According to those rules of reasoning, whereby the sinfulness of volitions is made to consist in their cause, any man may be safely challenged to give an intelligible definition of sinfulness, or convey any idea of the thing, or shew the least possibility of its existence.

If there is any such thing as sinfulness, it must be in the thing which is sinful : the essence of it must be in the thing itself, not in its cause ; as much as warmth and brightness are in the beams of the sun, in distinction from that which is the *cause* of their being emitted and sent down hither upon our world. And if this is true, no appearance of argument can be drawn from the consideration that there is *moral quality*—virtue or vice—in the voluntary exertions of the minds of men, against a certain, infallible connexion in things, and the doctrine which maketh human volitions the *effect* of some external influence, or extrinsic cause.

Because the sun is luminous and warm, it would be very ridiculous to reason, that therefore the cause of the existence of that warm and luminous body is also itself warm and luminous. Equally absurd and ridiculous would it be to urge, that because there is such a thing in fact as sinful existence, therefore the cause of that existence must likewise be itself sinful : and still more ridiculous, if possible, so strenuously to hold to the opinion, that there is such a kind of connexion between causes (what may in the most strict and proper sense be so termed) and their effects, as that they *necessarily* partake of the *qualities* of each other, as to be driven to the hard necessity of supposing every thing which is sinful to be self-originated, self-existent.

However fit a subject the inquiry into the *cause* of human volitions may be to employ the talents of contemplative, inquisitive men, it is, however, a subject quite foreign from the present controversy ; having no particular relation to it, or connexion with it. The way therefore is open, notwithstanding any objections of this kind, for a direct proof of an established, infallible

lible certainty in things ; and for shewing a fixed connexion between antecedents and consequents, causes and effects. However intricate and perplexing the argument may be in other respects, it is quite unembarrassed in *this* : it can no longer justly be harrassed with the objection of its being inconsistent with all our ideas of virtue and vice.

Why it should be thought to be so inconsistent with truth and reason, that men should be praised or blamed for their own free, voluntary exertions, even though the operation and influence of some cause, extrinsic of themselves, were necessary to the taking place of these volitions, and their coming into existence, is difficult for me to conceive ; unless it be, that the necessity and concurrence of such a cause, to the taking place of the volitions of men, are inconsistent with those ideas of the sufficiency, and boasted independency, of men, which distinguish and degrade the human race. Nothing is more humbling to the pride of human nature than the thought of being held in a state of absolute dependence on the sovereign will of Him in whose hand our lives are, and whose are all our ways. To be fast bound under his power, and chained down in a state of the most perfect, entire dependence on the sovereign pleasure of some superior, invisible Agent, is a thought spurned at by the proud and haughty spirit ; and is most abhorrent from those ideas of self-sufficiency and importance, which, to the eternal disgrace of the species, are cherished in the hearts of men.

S E C T. V.

In which is inquired, Whether there is not an antecedent certainty of the existence of every event which ever comes into being ?

A CERTAIN, established connexion between causes and their effects, and the infallible antecedent certainty

certainty of all events which ever come into existence, is an argument which hath been handled by Mr. Edwards with such peculiar strength and perspicuity, in that every inquiry which our Author hath undertaken to examine ; that, until *his* reasonings in support of the opinion of such a connexion in things are obviated and refuted by the advocates for such a liberty and freedom in human nature as is inconsistent with an absolute previous certainty of all events, it seemeth almost impertinent to offer any thing farther upon the subject. Propriety, however, will hardly admit of its being passed over in silence. I would therefore, in this section, briefly suggest a few arguments in support of this opinion.

I. That it should be so, and that there is a certain, infallible connexion of all events which ever take place, with some antecedent cause or ground of their existence, is a dictate of natural reason, and perfectly agreeable to the common sense and understandings of men. Wherever we behold an event, there we infer a cause : this seems to be one of the first dictates of the reason of men. There is nothing in which mankind give earlier testimonies of reasoning, than in inferences which they very apparently make from effect to cause. And this, indeed, is a first principle, and the ground of all our reasonings—that every *effect* must have a *cause* ; and *that*, such an one as is adequate to it : and that effects are always indissolubly connected with their causes. If this principle is given up, all the foundation of our reasoning is destroyed, and we are left in a state of the utmost uncertainty and doubtfulness. If this principle is removed, Paul's reasonings (Rom. 1. 20.) in proof of the existence and perfection of one supreme GOD, are utterly inconclusive and false. *He* says, “The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are *clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and Godhead.” And yet this conclusion of the Apostle's is entirely grounded on the supposition,

M

that

that every effect hath a cause ; and, that effects and their causes are closely and inseparably connected together. If this is not an undoubted truth, the Apostle's reasonings are unjust ; his conclusions precipitant. For the existence and perfection of the Godhead are seen and understood by the things that are made, only as the *cause* is seen and understood in and by its *effect*. But if there may be an effect without a cause, and unconnected with cause ; then no cause can be certainly seen and understood by, or in, its effect. If one event may exist without any antecedent ground and cause, another may also : and therefore it will be impossible to determine, from effects, which have, and which have not, a cause ; which, or whether any at all, are connected with any antecedent cause or reason of their existence. For if the least conceivable event may exist without a cause, all ground of faith is at once removed, and all the labour of mankind after knowledge and truth, as to matters of faith, is utterly in vain.

And if this reasoning (from effect to cause) is just, when applied to material, inanimate things ; much more so is it, when applied to animate, immaterial things. Here the argument strongly concludeth from the less, to the greater. If events in the natural world require a cause, certainly a cause is not less necessary to the existence of those more important and interesting events which take place in the moral world. If a *cause* may be seen in the smallest event ; much more may it be seen in greater and more important ones. And surely none can deny, that moral events do as visibly need to be under the restraints and guidance of wisdom, as natural ones : and it is as much a dictate of reason, that it is wise and fit that the time, manner, and all the circumstances, of their existence, should be exactly bounded, limited and prescribed.

The principle, therefore, of a possibility that events should come into existence without the influence of any extrinsic, antecedent cause, strikes at the very root of revelation ; taketh away all ground of the credibil-

ity

ity of it ; and at once divests it of all its authority to command our belief. If one event may take place without a cause, another may : and *it may be* that this grand and beautiful system, which our eyes behold, was self-originated and self-made ; and that the surprising scene, and regular succession of events which have taken place in our world, have somehow unaccountably jumbled into existence in such admirable harmony and order, neither under the guidance of wisdom, nor the influence of cause. And thus the denial of this grand principle of knowledge leads immediately to the Epicurean doctrine of CHANCE.

It is as much a dictate of the common understandings of men, that there is a connexion of *moral events* with their causes, as of *natural* : and upon this ground only is it, that we use wisdom and art in adapting motives to the dispositions of men. Our notions of *habit* and *character*, if strictly examined, will appear to be nothing more than an apprehended connexion of a number and series of mental exercises, of the same general nature and denomination. It is upon an apprehension of such a connexion, that we form any conclusions, or even conjecture, respecting the future conduct of particular persons ; and pretend to judge, from what hath already appeared in them, how they will conduct under any given circumstances, and in any particular situation. It is only on supposition of a connexion between causes and effects, as well in the moral as in the natural world, that we suppose ourselves to have the least authority to form even a conjecture, concerning the future existence of any one event that can possibly be named. On this foundation it is, that all our faith in divine revelation is built ; no man, any otherwise than on the supposition of such a connexion, having the least reasonable ground to hope for the accomplishment of any one of the promises of it.

Nothing can be more certain, than that the accomplishment of the prophecies of the word of God doth

so much depend on the voluntary exercises of free agents, and is so intimately connected with them, as that without them it is not possible that they should ever be accomplished and fulfilled. And it is absurd to say, that any event can be more certain than the *means* through which it is to take place; that the accomplishment of any prophecy can be more certain, than those voluntary exercises of intelligent creatures, in which their accomplishment consisteth. But if there is no connexion in things, between causes and effects, antecedents and consequents, beside what is consistent with that power of *self-determination* in men, and freedom to *either side*, which the Ex—r pleads for, as being necessary to moral action; it will be utterly impossible for any event whatever to become certain *by means of the voluntary exercises of men*, in any degree of consistency with the creature's being a fit subject of reward or punishment, praise or blame.

The Ex—r himself admits (p. 67, 81, 82.) that every *moral event* must have an answerable cause; but insisteth, that it must be a *moral cause*; and appeals to the common understanding of men, whether *intelligent mind* must not be *that cause*. And as, upon his principles, it cannot be that the Deity should be the cause of human volitions; he would hence infer, that mankind—voluntary agents—are the *causes* of their own voluntary exertions and actions; and, consequently, *determine themselves* (i. e. self-determined) to moral good and evil. Our Author's reasonings here appear to me to be, as well subversive of his own principles, as inconclusive in themselves. For,

1. They admit an infallible connexion between human volitions and *some antecedent cause*. If every moral event hath an answerable cause on which it is dependent for its existence; then all moral events come into existence under the *influence* of their several causes—an influence which is *previous* to the event and *extrinsic* of it, and with which the event is certainly connected. Now if moral events stand in such a relation to their causes,

causes, and are so connected with them, it cannot be that the voluntary exercises of mankind are *self-originated*: this connexion being as inconsistent with a power of self-determination in men, as any doctrine of necessity that was ever espoused by Hobbs, Spinoza or Mr. Edwards. Let the *cause* of moral events be *intelligent mind*, or what else it will, *that* doth not hinder or break that certain connexion in things—between human volitions and *some* antecedent cause, which entirely subverteth that liberty—that freedom to *either side*, which, in our Author's view, is essential to virtue and vice. If our Author meaneth to account for that moral event called *volition*, by *intelligent mind*, as its cause, in order to evade the evidence of a fixt connexion and antecedent certainty of things; his consequence is certainly exceedingly lame: it hath no *connexion* with his premises. To argue against an established connexion in things, and between causes and effects, only by resolving *some events* into *some certain, particular cause*, is not to bring a reason to which any one can justly expect a reply.*

2. Our Author urgeth, that *the* intelligent mind, which is the cause of moral events—volitions—must be the *human* mind, not the *divine*. But yet *intelligent mind*,

* The connexion of the acts of the will, with some antecedent, extrinsic cause, is very fully and expressly asserted by Dr. Whitby, in his *discourse on the five points*, notwithstanding his showing himself so strenuous an advocate for a power of self-determination in men. In treating on the influences of the divine spirit, in his discourse of *sufficient and effectual, common and special grace*, he saith (p. 221, 222. edit. 2.) "That it must be granted that in raising an idea in my brain by the *Holy Spirit*, and the impression made upon it there, the action is truly *physical*: "That in those actions I am *wholly passive*—That these operations are *irresistible* "in their production." And (p. 303.) that "when evidence is propounded and "discerned, the mind doth *necessarily* assent unto it." Here the reader will observe, that, according to the Doctor, we are *wholly passive* and *necessary* in our assent to propositions—speculative truth; and that such assent ariseth *altogether* from *extrinsic, PHYSICAL* influence and operation. And this same Author asserteth (p. 212.) that "what makes the will choose, is something approved by the understanding, and consequently appearing to the soul as good." And saith, that "to say that evidence proposed, apprehended and considered, is not *sufficient* to "make the understanding to approve; or that the greatest good proposed, or the "greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is not *sufficient* "to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, is, in effect, to say, "that which alone doth move the will to choose or to refuse, is not sufficient to engage it so to do." And all the arguments on that and one or two of the next succeeding pages, are calculated and urged to prove a connexion of acts of the will, with some antecedent views of the mind.

mind, in his sense of the expression, is itself as much an *effect* as any thing else ; and standeth in as much need of a cause for *its* support, as that *moral event* itself, of which intelligent mind is the cause. His device, therefore, is quite insufficient to account for human volitions, in consistency with their being unconnected, in their existence, with any antecedent cause. To pretend to account for *one moral event by another*, and *that* an event the existence of which is as unaccountable as the other, for the existence of which *this* is brought into view as a reason or cause ; and *this*, too, in order to evince the possibility of the existence of *some events*, without connexion with *any* antecedent cause ; every critical reader will at once see is perfectly inconsistent and absurd.

It is conceded that every moral event must have a cause. The exercises of the human will are the events in question. Our Author appeals to “those who have common understanding to judge,” whether *intelligent* mind (not the Deity, but the mind itself, for the *exercise* of which a cause is sought) is not the cause. I believe we may safely venture to put the decision of the question upon the proposed issue.

II. A fixed, unalterable, established connexion in things ; or a previous infallible certainty of all events which ever did, or will, take place within the whole compass of creation ; may be most clearly and certainly inferred from the constant, absolute dependence which all things have upon God. Every *cause* which exerteth any influence in the whole universe, deriveth all its operative power and strength ultimately from God ; and, therefore, in all its exertions, must be, in some way or other, connected either mediately or immediately with the divine will, and the constant exertions of the divine mind. Even admitting that there are such powers of human nature as our Author urgeth (were it, indeed, possible to form any manner of idea or conception of them) still for their *being*—their *existence*—they must, of necessity, be constantly dependent

ent on God. It cannot be supposed, with the least appearance of reason, that men, or *any other creatures*, are so formed, dignified and endowed, as to be capable of existing, and remaining any thing, even the space of a single moment, without divine aids, and supports from without, so as to render a *positive act of power* necessary to annihilate and reduce them to their original nothing. And whatever is *altogether* and *entirely* dependent on God for its *existence*, in the whole and every part of it; must, of consequence, be dependent on God for its *exertion*, in the whole and every degree of it:—the exertion being one thing which necessarily comes into consideration in determining the *nature* and *quality* of the existence which is supported and upheld.* And if the power insisted on, in every degree of its exertion, is dependent on God, the consequence undeniably is, that its *exertions* are, in some way or another, closely and inseparably connected with some antecedent cause. And if they are connected with some antecedent cause, nothing is more manifest than that there is an antecedent certainty of their existence. These consequences, to me, it appeareth, cannot be evaded, without denying, not only an *immediate*, but even an ultimate, dependence on God. A *mediate* and *ultimate* dependence as truly giveth a previous, absolute and infallible certainty to any thing, as an *immediate* dependence. The whole and only difference is, that, *in the one case*, the cause which determines and giveth certainty to the event, operates through one or a number of *means*, before its genuine tendency and ultimate influence becometh visible in event: *in the other*, its tendency and influence are *immediately* seen; and it doth not operate and extend through *any medium*, to its effect. It is quite unphilosophical (not to say atheistical) to suffer any number of intervening *media* to obscure

* This observation is undoubtedly just, if men have not a power of self-determination or of originating voluntary motion in themselves. For if men have not this power, they are equally dependent on God for their *exercises* as for their *being*—their existence. And for a proof that there are no such powers in men, I beg leave to refer the reader to the next section, where this subject is particularly considered.

obscure the agency of that divine hand which God is lifting up and making visible in all his works. And it is very ungrateful and disrespectful to the Deity, for us to suffer an *established course* of things, or an *operation by means*, to lessen our sense of dependence on him.

But that a power of self-determination in men, and of beginning motion in themselves, should be spoken of as inconsistent with that dependence which creatures necessarily have on God, Dr. Clarke, in his demonstration of the being and attributes of God, and our Author after him (as he quotes him with approbation, p. 93, 94. marg.) thinketh to be only "a childish trifling with words." Let us hear the Doctor's more manly reasoning upon the subject. In the first place he tells us that "a power of *beginning* motion is not *in itself* an impossible thing," (a power in a being to begin *his own internal motion* he doubtless meaneth, or his observation is perfectly impertinent,) "because it must of necessity be in the supreme cause." (edit. 8. p. 83.) Hence he concludes, that it *may be communicated* to creatures. The Doctor goes on to observe farther, that such a power no more implieth independency, than our powers of perception and consciousness imply independence on God. He says, "In reality it is altogether as hard to conceive how consciousness or the power of perception should be communicated to a created being, as how a power of self-motion should be so." (p. 84.) A small degree of reflection, I think, will convince any one that the Doctor's observations are neither just nor pertinent. For,

1. By what authority doth he so peremptorily conclude that this power of beginning motion must *necessarily* be in the supreme cause? There is, in truth, no more reason to suppose that such a power existeth in the supreme, than in subordinate, beings. It is, if possible, a greater inconsistency to suppose it to be in God, than in men. However, that which is perfectly inconsistent and absurd in itself, and is a notion which is, in various ways, subversive of itself, can, with no propriety,

propriety, be applied either to the Creator, or to his creature. That which is absurd and inconsistent with itself, is so, be it where it will; either in the Supreme, or in some subordinate cause.

But if this power is indeed of God, there must have been a time, according to the Doctor's own stating of the matter, when motion *did begin* in God. To talk of there being a power of *beginning* (internal) *motion* in God, without supposing that the motion and exercise of the divine mind ever did, or in the nature of things might be conceived to, *begin*, I think we may be allowed to say, is "a childish trifling with words." And to speak of the motion and exercise of the divine mind as *in fact* ever beginning to exist, is *more* than "a childish trifling with words;" even an effectual denial of the existence and perfection of God. But doth the Doctor, and the Ex—r after him, who thinks that the Doctor hath argued the possibility and reality of such a power "in a clear and *conclusive* manner," imagine the motion—the exercise of the divine mind—ever began? Do these Gentlemen suppose that the Deity existed for a time, without the least *motion* or thought of heart, or any degree of *exercise* of will?—and that then, by his sovereign *pleasure* (which, by the way, did not yet exist) he brought his own infinite mind so *into motion*, as that, in *consequence* of this motion, it *might be his pleasure* that motion should *begin*? Certainly such reasonings as these are very unfitly styled "demonstration of the *being and attributes of God*;" since, if there was any truth in them, they would much more fully *demonstrate* that there is no such being as God, of *any* attributes or perfections. Surely the supposition of the *possibility* of the communication of such a power to the creature, needeth some better support than this, in order to gain credit in the world.

In opposition to this meaning of the Doctor's, the reader may find that he himself asserteth (p. 15.) that "whatever exists, must either have come into being

“out of nothing, absolutely without a cause ; or it
“must have been produced by some *external* cause ;
“or it must be self-existent.” And farther on the
same page he saith, that for any thing to be *produced by
itself* is an express contradiction. And on p. 60. he
makes use of the same kind of reasoning respecting ex-
ternal motion, in order to prove the eternal existence
of a wise, intelligent Cause. Yet he constantly urgeth
a power of beginning motion as essential to liberty, both
in the Creator and the creature. (See p. 73. 77.)
How far these things are consistent, every reader may
judge. It is very manifest, that voluntary exertion
(the motion in question) whenever it taketh place, is
something which doth exist. According to the Doctor’s
reasoning, therefore, it either comes into being with-
out a cause ; or is *produced by some external cause* ; or
must be self-existent. But that any thing should come
into being *without a cause*, the Doctor himself urgeth,
is a plain contradiction. That our voluntary exertions
are self-existent, so clear a reasoner as the Doctor will
by no means insist ; especially since he is so careful to
vindicate his doctrine of a power of self-motion in
men, from the objection, that it implieth independency
on God. How then can he consistently support his
own principles of a power of self-determination, or of
beginning motion in ourselves, as essential to moral
liberty and freedom ? And why is it not a plain and
manifest consequence of his own reasonings, that vol-
untary exertion doth indeed arise from some *external
cause* ? And besides, the Doctor expressly alloweth an
antecedent, absolute certainty of all events, and that
the divine prescience supposeth it : (See p. 103, 104.)
which is as utterly inconsistent with that kind of liberty
for which he pleadeth, as any necessity respecting hu-
man volitions which is ever urged by Calvinistic di-
vines. Nothing, certainly, but a strong attachment
to some pre-conceived opinion, could have driven so
clear and excellent a reasoner as Dr. Clarke, to say
things so evidently absurd and inconsistent with each
other !

2. The Doctor greatly mistakes us, if he supposeth that we mean to account for the *manner* of divine operation in communicating *consciousness*, *perception*, or any thing else, to men; and *from thence* argue the inconsistency of his communicating to us the powers in question. The *modus* of divine operation, in producing moral being, perception and consciousness, is what no one, that I know of, pretends to comprehend. But if consciousness and perception are the fruit of divine efficiency and operation, then *for these powers* creatures are dependent on God. The Doctor speaks of a *power of existing*, of *being conscious*, &c. in a manner which as truly implieth *independency*, as that power of *self-motion*, for which he is so strenuous an advocate. If by these expressions he means a power in men, the fruit of the exertion and influence of which is their existence or consciousness, he is very safe in concluding that such powers as truly imply independence on God, as it can be supposed to be implied in a power of self-motion, self-determination. And whenever we concede, that human nature is endowed with such powers, we will then readily admit that the Doctor's "clear and conclusive reasonings" are quite sufficient to silence all our objections against that opinion of a power of self-motion in men, *which arise from an apprehension of its inconsistency with that dependence which all creatures have upon God.*

3. Instead of fairly answering the objection, therefore, the Doctor only lets us know, that the very same objection lieth with equal weight against some things which *he supposeth* we receive for truth; and, therefore, that it is unreasonable *for us* to mention it. The objection against *his* opinion, as he himself states it, let it be remembered, is, that it implieth ability in men to *act independently from any superior cause.* And is not the very thing which he is pleading for, a power in men to *originate* their own internal exercises and motions?—even so that the *nature* of these exercises, and the *direction* of these motions, shall be determined, not

by any *extrinsic*, but wholly by an *intrinsic* cause? And doth not this imply, that these motions and exercises are independent of every thing *extrinsic* of the man whose exercises they are? Doth not the Doctor's opinion, even by the very terms, imply that there are grounds for the objection which the maintainers of fate (as he is pleased to term them) make against it, viz. that it implieth an ability in the creature to *act* independently from any superior cause? Is it not a power of SELF-MOTION that the Doctor so strenuously urgeth? And what can *this power* mean, unless it be, that for *certain exercises and motions* we are dependent only on ourselves—not on any *foreign, extrinsic* cause? For us to be independent on any superior cause *for our actions*, is to have our *actions* arise from no external, superior efficiency, or cause. And when our *actions* arise from no such efficiency, then we *act independently* of any such efficiency. When our *actions* do arise from any external efficiency and influence, then they are not *self-originated*—we are not *self-moved*. For *self-originated motion* to be dependent on *extrinsic cause and influence*, for its existence, is a contradiction in terms. When the *action* of the mind doth not arise from the influence of any external, superior cause; then it certainly *acteth* independently of such cause. The *fatalists*, therefore, will doubtless think that there is weight in their objection, until a better and more pertinent answer is provided, than the Doctor hath given it.

As to the Doctor's argument from the *feelings*, the experience of mankind, there certainly cannot be much weight in it. He says, "We have all the same experience, the same marks and evidence, exactly, of our having really a power of self-motion, as the most rigid fatalist could possible contrive to require, if he was to make the *supposition* of a man's being endued with that power." (p. 85.) This is a bare assertion as to matter of fact. And the advocates for *certain connexion*, to be sure Mr. Edwards and his followers,

as confidently assert, that "all their *feelings*, their *experience*, their perception and consciousness, are but precisely such as are perfectly consistent with that established connexion and previous certainty of things, for the belief of which they have had the opprobrious name of *fatalists* so liberally bestowed upon them." Just as much weight as is laid upon the one of these arguments or assertions, must also be allowed the other; by which means they will exactly counterbalance and destroy each other.

III. That there is a previous certainty of all events—a certain, infallible connexion in things—is abundantly manifest from the doctrine of the fore-knowledge of God. That there is such a fore-knowledge of God, even of the volitions of men, the most hidden, secret volitions and exercises of their thoughts and hearts, is very clearly evident from the word of God, as well as from the constant conformity of Divine Providence, in all ages, to the view and representation of things given in his holy word. And since God's certain fore-knowledge of all things is a doctrine conceded by the advocates for a power of self-determination in men, I shall not think it necessary to enter upon the proof of it; but shew the certainty with which this doctrine inferreth an established connexion in things, and a *previous* infallible certainty of all events which ever take place in the *moral*, as well as in the *natural* world.

It is impossible any event should be *fore-known*, the future existence of which is uncertain. Any event, the future existence of which is in the nature of things uncertain, *may fail of taking place*. And to suppose that any such event should be *fore-known*, very ill consisteth with the possibility of its failing of ever gaining existence. This is just the same as to suppose that the existence of an event may be *fore-known*, which yet *may never take place*. *Fore-knowledge* of an event is a *knowledge* of the *certainty* of the future existence of that event. But if there is not, in the nature of things,
an

an absolute certainty of the future existence of an event ; nothing can be more manifestly absurd, than to suppose that its future existence should be *fore-known*. Knowledge of any thing, as it relateth to the present argument, is no other than the mind's *seeing*, or *perceiving*, its *certainty*. But to suppose that certainty should be *seen* and *perceived* where it is *not*, and where it *doth not exist*, is irrational and absurd. Where there is sufficient strength of faculties, it is possible that whatever *doth exist*, may be perceived and seen. But to see things *which are not*—*which do not exist*—requires very *peculiar* faculties, and a stretch of powers quite beyond all degree of human conception and comprehension, and even directly contradictory thereto. An event which is contingent, and the existence of which is not now *certainly future*, cannot be seen to be future, by *immediate intuition* ; for, by the supposition, there is no such event *existing*. Strength of faculties, and quickness and accuteness of discernment, better enable beings to see and discover whatever *is*—whatever *doth exist*. But no conceivable strength of faculties, and enlargement of powers, make any advances toward a discovery and sight of what *is not*. Such an event, could it be conceived of, could not be seen by *means* of any thing else ; for, by supposition, it is wholly unconnected with any thing else. Until, therefore, they who oppose the doctrine of an absolute connexion in things, and an infallible antecedent certainty of all events, shew us some way in which events, so contingent as they imagine human volitions are, may be certainly *fore-known*, we shall think the doctrine of the divine prescience an insuperable difficulty in the way of their scheme. As all events, the existence of which is *certain*, are capable of being *fore-known* ; so, on the other hand, all events which are capable of being *fore-known*, have *antecedent certainty* of existence. Fore-knowledge, and antecedent certainty of existence, mutually imply each other.

The Ex—r seemeth sensible of a difficulty in his
scheme,

scheme, arising from the doctrine of the prescience of God ; and doth not *even pretend* to answer and remove it. He says (p. 104.) " The difficulty arising from " the divine prescience we pretend not to be able to " clear : " but adds, " it is sufficient that it equally " lies against Mr. Edwards's doctrine." By what methods of reasoning our Author persuaded himself that there was any difficulty, from the doctrine of the divine prescience, attending *his* doctrine of a previous infallible certainty of all events (which is the argument wherein the fore-knowledge of God is introduced by Mr. Edwards) it is difficult for me to apprehend. But that he should think this answer *sufficient*, may appear a little surprising to the reader, if he will be pleased to turn no farther back than to the note on the next preceding page of his book. There, the reader will find, our Author is objecting against Mr. Edwards's doctrine, that it makes God " the proper author, the " efficient cause, of all the sins of men and devils." In reference to this, his words are, " To which objection it is really surprising to find Mr. Edwards " returning this answer—that the doctrine of his opposers is involved in the same difficulty. For admit " it to be so, is this a proper answer ? If either his " doctrine, or theirs, is justly chargeable with such a " consequence, by all the regard we owe to a Deity, " and Moral Governor, we are bound to reject a " scheme which contains such an imputation on him." To deny the prescience of God, or adopt a scheme of doctrine which cannot be reconciled with his certain fore-knowledge of all events, carries an imputation on God *as really* dishonourable to him, as any of the obnoxious sentiments supposed by our Author to be contained in that tract of Mr. Edwards, upon which he is animadverting. And yet this is a difficulty with which our Author's scheme is *confessedly* embarrassed, and from which he doth not *even pretend* to be able to clear it. *To which objection, I may now say in my turn, it is really surprising to find our Author returning this*
answer—

answer—that the doctrine of his opposer is involved in the same difficulty. For admit it to be so; is this a proper answer? If either his doctrine, or theirs, is justly chargeable with such a consequence, by all the regard we owe to a Deity, and Moral Governor, we are bound to reject a scheme which contains such an imputation on him. Surely the impropriety of returning such an answer could not have made a very deep impression upon the mind of our Author; or he must have remembered it, at least for one page forward.

S E C T. VI.

Wherein the notion of a power of self-determination in the will, or of originating motion in ourselves, is carefully considered, and the inconsistency of it shown.

THE idea of a power of self-determination in men, and of originating motion in themselves, hath been shewn by Mr. Edwards to be so perfectly inconsistent and absurd, so repugnant to itself and to common sense; that, until *his* reasonings are shewn to be inconclusive, and the sophistry of *his* arguments exposed, it seems unnecessary that any thing farther should be said upon the subject. Propriety, however, will hardly suffer it to be wholly passed over in silence, in an essay on that agency, to which such a power is esteemed *essential* by those who appear as advocates for it. It might be reasonably expected of any one who attempteth publicly to expose “the falshood of Mr. Edwards’s scheme,” that he should provide a pertinent answer to the reasons by which that Author supports it, and shew the weakness and inconclusiveness of the arguments which he maketh use of in its defence. But this, I think, the Ex—r hath not even attempted. Nothing is said, thro’ his whole performance, to shew the unjustness or falshood of that Author’s reasonings on this subject; or, in any measure,

to

to take off the edge or abate the force of them. The principal argument which our Author offereth in confutation of Mr. Edwards's reasonings, *particularly on this subject*, is, that the doctrine of such an infallible connexion in things, as is inconsistent with the power in question, makes God the Author of sin, and implieth the concurrence of positive divine efficiency to the taking place of such an event. Whether this is an objection of any weight, and by any means sufficient to overthrow the doctrine against which it is brought, I shall, by and by, consider as carefully as I can.

Our Author, indeed, informs the public, in his preface, that "the inquisitive may find a full answer to the principal arguments of Mr. Edwards's book, speculatively considered, in Dr. Clarke's demonstration of the being and attributes of God." If the Doctor's answer is so full and complete, our Author might doubtless have given a summary of it, in so clear and striking a manner, and set it in so strong and convincing a light, as would have put a final period to the debate on this intricate subject. He hath not, however, seen fit to take this method to elucidate his subject. The public, therefore, may perhaps dissent from the Ex—r in opinion, concerning the fulness and perspicuity of the Doctor's answer to the principal arguments of Mr. Edwards's book.

I would, therefore, in this section, propose the doctrine of a power of self-determination in the will, or of originating motion in ourselves, to free and careful examination.

I confess myself diffculted, however, to form any clear, determinate idea of the power in question. A power of self-determination appears to me incapable of definition or conception. If I misrepresent the opinion of our Author, and of Gentlemen on that side of the question with him respecting liberty; it is not with design, but wholly for want of understanding what the opinion and sentiment really is.

In speaking of the power which, in his view, is necessary

cessary to moral liberty and agency, our Author termeth it “a power of self-determination,” (p. 34. 88.) and, after Dr. Clarke,* “a power of beginning motion—a power of self-motion,” &c. (p. 93, 94, 95. marg.) It is spoken of as a *self-moving faculty—a principle or power of beginning motion.* (p. 91. marg.) The Ex—r considers it as a power whereby *men are the voluntary, designing causes of their own volitions.* (p. 81, 82.) It hence appears that the power which our Author insists on as essential to moral liberty, is a capacity, or faculty, with which moral agents are endowed, of *beginning and originating their own internal motions and voluntary exertions*: even so that nothing but what is *in the man*, and what properly *belongeth to him*, can justly be considered as the *cause* of his mental exercises and volitions. Accordingly he urgeth that *we must be the causes of our own volitions.* (p. 82.) And represents the application of commands, invitations, monitions, &c. as being consistent with a *freedom to either side.* (p. 109.) This is the power—these are the faculties, which, in our Author’s view, are essential to moral action, virtue or vice, praise or blame.

MORAL ACTION, therefore, upon these principles, is something of which there is no cause, reason, or ground whatsoever of its existence. “For whatever exists, must either have come into being out of no-
“ thing

* The Doctor’s pretended demonstration of the reality of the existence of that kind of liberty and freedom of will which he considereth as essential to the morality of actions, drawn from the power there is essentially in God to begin motion; which power it is supposed he hath communicated to his creatures; I must beg leave to consider as a mere quibble upon the term *motion*. When he first advanceth his argument for *freedom of will*, from a power in the Deity to *begin motion*; his readers would naturally be led, from his manner of using the term, to understand him to speak of *external, material motion*, though, afterwards, the term is so used as to convey the idea of *voluntary exercise—internal motion*. If the Doctor’s argument for liberty is that there is a power in God, which, in kind and in a degree, he hath communicated to men, to begin *external, material motion*; with whom doth he imagine that he is contending? But because there is a power in the Deity to begin *external, material motion*, doth it from thence follow that he hath a power to begin his own *internal, voluntary exercises and motions*? Or from a power in men to begin such kind of motion, doth it at all follow, that they are possessed of *that power of will and self-determination* which the Doctor urgeth? His premises and consequence are certainly utter strangers to each other. So weak an argument, from so strong and masterly a reasoner, rendereth the cause itself, in which it is urged, justly suspicious.

“ thing, absolutely without a cause ; or it must have
 “ been produced by some *external cause* ; or it must
 “ be self-existent ;” the two last of which will not ei-
 ther of them be pretended of creatures. (See Dr.
 Clarke’s Demonstrat. &c. p. 15. edit. 8.) This also is
 very manifestly implied by the terms SELF-MOTION,
 SELF-MOTIVE, POWER, SELF-MOVING FACULTY,
 &c. It is, by the very terms, a motion or exercise,
 for which there is no ground, reason or cause, *out of*
itself and of what properly belongeth to its very nature.
 Nothing, therefore, can be more preposterous, than
 to attempt to give a reason for the existence, or taking
 place, of that kind of *action*, of which our Author
 would predicate either virtue or vice, according to
 his own definition of it. The very attempt denieth
 the thing designed to be illustrated and proved. And
 yet our Author blames Mr. Edwards for not having
 shown the *cause* of volition. On the other hand, our
 Author blames Dr. Clarke for speaking of a *ground*,
foundation, *cause*, or *reason*, of God’s being ; because,
 as he supposeth, there is an utter impropriety in sup-
 posing any thing, in any sense, the *prior* ground of the
first existence. (See p. 37, 38. marg.) And yet there
 is as manifest an impropriety in attempting to give a
reason or *cause* for the existence of *that* which is *self-*
originated ; as, to assign a *prior* ground of the *first*
 existence.

According to our Author’s definition of the *power*
 in question, the following things, it may be observed,
 are essential to moral action.

1. That, immediately antecedent to choice, or vo-
 luntary exertion, man must be perfectly *indifferent* in
 the state of his mind ; without the least degree of in-
 clination, bias, or preponderation, one way or the
 other ; or, to one thing more than to another. Ac-
 cordingly we find that the advocates for the *power*
 under consideration, expressly and avowedly plead for
 a *liberty of indifference*, as being essential to virtue or
 vice, praise or blame.

2. Another thing essential to the *power* under consideration, is, that there should be no prevailing tendency or preponderation, in the state of things, from *outward objects*, to any one particular choice or voluntary exercise, rather than another ; from which tendency, or preponderation, there should arise a greater probability that *one particular volition* should take place, than another. All such prevailing tendency in outward objects must infallibly be of the nature of that necessity, which, in our Author's view, is inconsistent with all ideas of moral desert in actions. For as far as there is a preponderancy and prevailing tendency in things to one *certain*, particular volition, *rather than another* ; so far a connexion taketh place between volition, and some antecedent, external cause. But such a connexion as this, in every degree of it, the Ex—r insists, is inconsistent with that sovereignty over our own actions, which, in his view, is essential to all ideas of moral desert.

3. In that indifference which is insisted on as essential to free and moral action, it is evident, man must be either perceptive and conscious, or utterly unconscious and impercipient. If, in that indifference, which, in our Author's view, is essential to the morality of action, the mind is perfectly *unconscious* and *impercipient* ; it must be supposed, that, by an exertion of its own, for which (it is to be remembered) there was no antecedent cause, reason or ground, and in which it is, itself, utterly without any degree of consciousness or perception, it awakened and roused up itself into consciousness, activity and life. If, on the other hand, in that indifference which is immediately to precede the election of the mind, in order that its choice may be free, it is *percipient* and *conscious* ; it must be supposed that the mind takes into its view the ideas of things proposed to its *free* choice, and surveyeth them in their several properties, relations and connexions, with a perfect indifference of mind, without the least bias or inclination one way or the other ;
until

until the noble, unfettered soul, by its non-sovereign and arbitrary act, (which, by the way, is antecedent to *any degree of mental action and exertion* commandeth itself into a bias and preponderation of disposition towards *some one* of that variety of objects which are in view, rather than all others.

All these things appear to me necessary to that power of *self-motion, self-determination*, which, in our Author's view, is essential to moral agency, virtue and vice. For if there is any *internal bias* upon the mind, inclining and prevailingly disposing it to any particular action or choice, rather than its opposite; or, if there is any thing in the state, circumstances, situation or connexion of *outward objects*, from whence ariseth a prevailing tendency or preponderation, in any way, or on any account, to one certain, particular choice of the mind, rather than another; in that case it is manifest that either this *internal bias*, or the *external circumstances* of things, concur as *cause* to the taking place of an act of will, and to determine it to be *as it is* and *not otherwise*. But that such a connexion of volition with *any antecedent cause*, or ground of its existence, is consistent with that liberty and freedom which are essential to virtue and vice, appears to me utterly inconsistent with the whole drift of our Author's reasonings, and every attempt to prove the irreconcilableness of moral necessity, with internal, human liberty. Particularly doth he express himself to this purpose in p. 97. His words are these: "If external constraint or natural necessity renders a person incapable of such commands as respect *material action*; moral necessity, or internal constraint, must render him equally incapable of such commands as respect the exercises of the *mind*, or acts of volition."

But whether in this state of perfect indifference, which immediately precedeth the *free choice and election* of the mind, a person is perceptive and conscious, or utterly unconscious and impercipient, doth not appear by any thing our Author hath particularly and expressly

expressly said upon the subject. It may, therefore, be proper to consider the matter more attentively, in each of these views ; as the power urged by Arminian divines will certainly fall under the one or the other of these predicaments.

1. It will be worth our while to examine into the cause, or reason, of voluntary exertion, upon the supposition that man is perfectly *unconscious* and *impercipient* immediately preceding the choice and election of his mind.

To common understandings it must appear difficult to conceive how any thing, in a state of perfect imperceptivity and unconsciousness, should become active, conscious and percipient, without the influence and concurrence of any external cause. That such an event as this should take place, is as utterly inconceivable, as that non-entity should bring forth, and that an intelligent, perceptive being—yea, that thousands and millions of such—should spring immediately out of nothing into existence, without the creative power of another, and the influence of any external cause. That *perception* and *idea* should arise out of something which is as far from them as matter is from thought ; and this, too, without the concurrence and influence of any external operation and cause ; is a supposition which affronteth common sense, teareth up the foundation of all our reasonings, and is as full of absurdity as the atheistical notion of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms concurring to the formation of this stupendous and beautiful system.

To suppose man himself to be the *cause* of the *beginning* of his own perception, is quite as extravagant as to suppose him to be the cause of the beginning of his own existence. That exertion of his while *impercipient*, which must be the productive cause of perception, would be quite as extraordinary, as the exertion of one who doth not exist (however absurd and self-repugnant the supposition) in order to bring himself into being and existence. And to consider man as the

cause

cause of his own consciousness and exertion—there being neither consciousness nor exertion in him, otherwise than as a *fruit* of the operation of this mysterious cause—is to give such a view of *cause*, as at once strips it of every thing which contains in it a reason for the existence, or taking place, of any effect—or whereby it is adequate to the production of the effect, of which it assigned as the ground, reason or cause : and therefore leaveth the subject respecting man's first becoming perceptive, animate and conscious, as to any ground or reason of such an event, as perfectly in the dark as if no reason had been pretended to be assigned for it.

To suppose that man should be the *cause* of his own perception, by some exertions of his own, is to make the effect anticipate its cause, and gain existence without any of its assistance and influence. For, man, in this exertion of his for the production of perception, must be supposed to be perceptive and conscious ; otherwise, the exertion, whatever it may produce in him, cannot properly be called *his* exertion. So, likewise, a man must be *voluntary*, in that exertion of his, whereby he produceth his own volitions. And, if so, the cause or reason, itself, which is adduced for the solution of one difficulty, bringeth another as great along with it ; and will do so *in infinitum* : and, therefore, is a cause, or reason, which doth not at all assist us in our inquiries after truth, or answer any purpose in reasoning and argumentation.

2. It is questionable, whether the difficulty respecting man's being the *cause* of his own voluntary exertions, would be in any measure removed by supposing him to have idea or object in view, immediately preceding such exertion. The Ex—r constantly supposeth that men are the *designing causes* of those inward acts wherein the nature of virtue and vice consisteth. (See p. 67. 82.) If, immediately antecedent to any voluntary exertion, we are to consider man as having *idea* and object in view ; we are to conceive him as contemplating, with a perfect indifferency, that variety
of

of objects which surround him, and present themselves to his view ; having not the least degree of affection for one, more than another, until, by a certain noble sovereignty of his own, he *determines himself* into a preponderating bias, or inclination of mind, to one certain object, rather than another. Here the supposition under consideration presenteth to our view a *more philosophic kind of animal* than is probably to be found in our world ; or, even in any part of the creation of God ! And yet this is the state, these the circumstances, it is necessary for man to be in, immediately antecedent to any mental inclination, or voluntary exertion ; in order that such inclination and exertion may have moral quality—virtue or vice—predicated of it.

Upon the supposition that such an indifference as this is essential to the morality of action, and necessary immediately to precede the choice of the mind, in order that such choice may be free ; I desire that the following things may be observed.

1. Such an indifferency, or liberty to either side, as implieth a freedom from all propensity—all preponderating influence or bias, whereby it becomes more certain, or probable, from any consideration whatever, that choice, or volition, will terminate upon one object, than another ; is utterly inconsistent with all ideas of any *depravity* in human nature in its present fallen state, or any *disadvantage* mankind are laid under by our original sin and fall. * In p. 105 of his book, our Author speaks of an *impotency* derived to mankind from Adam, in such terms as would naturally lead his readers

* Dr. Whitby, on the five points, (p. 302, 303. edit. II.) alloweth that it may be consistent with a state of trial and freedom, for it to become *exceeding difficult* for men to do good, and for men to have a *strong bent, and powerful inclination*, to what is evil. And Dr. Taylor, in his *scripture doctrine*, &c. (edit. II) tells us, (p. 228.) “ That we are very *apt*, in a world full of temptation, to be deceived and drawn into sin by bodily appetites ; that when once we are under the government of these appetites, it is at least *exceeding difficult*, if not *impracticable*, to recover ourselves by the mere force of reason ; and, consequently, that we stand in need of the *life-giving Spirit*.” How far these sentiments are consistent with that power of *self-determination* insisted on by our Author, and so repeatedly urged by these Gentlemen themselves, I leave to the reader to judge.

readers to imagine that he conceived we were subjected to certain *disadvantages*, by the defection of our first parents from God. And in p. 61. 62. he admitteth that such a state of will may be required of us, as is forever impossible ; but supposeth that this can be only on supposition of a power once given, but lost. From such like passages and expressions, his readers would be naturally led to conclude that the Ex—r himself is of opinion that mankind are laid under some disadvantages, and are under some obstructions in the way of attaining that perfection and holiness which is required and demanded of them ; and are under some prevailing bias or tendency, either internal or external, to that sin and wickedness which is their utter ruin. But, this notwithstanding, he insisteth that such a power of self-determination as implieth a *freedom to either side*, is essential to that liberty which is necessary to the morality of action. To me this appeareth inconsistent ; and to include a concession that we may be under moral obligation to perform something to which we have not the freedom in question, and to which we have not a power of self-determination. If it is essential to the ideas of moral action, that man be possessed of such a power of self-determination as implieth a freedom from all bias or preponderation, either internal or external ; the consequence is unavoidable, either that mankind, in their present state, are not moral agents ; or, that, whatever may have been conceived, by gloomy minds, of the present *lapsed, degenerate* state of human nature, mankind do in fact possess all that perfection and dignity of nature with which Adam was endowed in his original state ; and are no farther the subjects of either praise or blame, than they act from the same *generous sovereignty* and *noble indifferency* with which it is supposed he was originally created and endowed.

2. Such a power of self-determination in men, as implieth an entire indifferency of will and affection, and a freedom from all internal bias and inclination,

P

and

and all preponderation or tendency arising from outward circumstances, situation or objects, to any particular, definite choice; is altogether inconsistent with the idea of a sinner's being *ever abandoned of God, and given over to the commission of sin*. It hath been the general opinion of Protestant Divines, that sinners are, sometimes, in such a sense abandoned of God, and given over to sinning, as implieth a strong, prevailing tendency in the state and circumstances of things, either internal or external, or both, to that moral evil and wickedness which is exceedingly provoking to him, and which draweth down his displeasure upon them. And this opinion is sufficiently authorized by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans. When he had been giving the character of the heathen world, and mentioning their proneness to idolatry, whereby they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, he says, (ver. 24.) *Wherefore, also, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts*. And (ver. 26.) *For this cause God gave them up to vile affections*. And even the Ex-r himself, though, as it appears to me, in direct opposition to the leading sentiments of his whole book, yet appears, by some things said in it, to be of the same opinion. In p. 107, he speaks of *sinners being abandoned and given up of God*; and formeth an argument upon it, and draws a conclusion from it, as he imagineth, in favour of a power of self-determination in men. It is difficult to conceive what our Author can intend by the expression of *sinners being abandoned and given up of God*, short of a prevailing tendency in the state of things, either internal or external, to that sin which is their ruin—some such tendency as is utterly inconsistent with a *freedom to either side*. And it is very manifest that this is the sense in which he useth the phrase, by the argument which he foundeth upon it, in order to establish his own sentiment—a sentiment directly repugnant to it, and most perfectly inconsistent with it. For as far as
any

any of the determinations of the mind take place under such an influence as must certainly be implied in the expressions of *being abandoned* and *given up of God*, (if they have any meaning) they cannot be *self-originated* and *self-moved*; and, therefore, in our Author's sense of freedom, cannot be free. If persons being abandoned and given up of God *doth not* import any prevailing tendency and preponderation, in the state and circumstances of things, to vice and wickedness, rather than to virtue and holiness; certainly no weight can be laid upon the supposition that sinners are sometimes abandoned and given up of God, as an argument to prove that a power of *self-determination*, and a *freedom to either side*, is a privilege of which they had been *heretofore* possessed: if it *doth* import such a prevailing tendency and preponderation, &c. then surely that liberty, which is essential to the *morality* of actions, is consistent with a *prevailing tendency* in the state and circumstances of things, either external or internal, or both, to those actions and determinations which are denominated morally evil.

To speak of sinners being abandoned and given up of God, without importing a prevailing tendency to such choice and actions as are morally evil, in distinction from those which are morally virtuous and good; is to talk unintelligibly and without meaning. To speak of a power of self-motion, self-determination, as something which is consistent with a prevailing tendency in things to *one particular event* in distinction from all others, and in opposition to them, is to use terms in a manner equally unmeaning and unintelligible. Either, therefore, there can no such thing in nature take place, respecting any man, as may, with the least appearance of propriety, be termed his being *abandoned and given up of God*; or, on the other hand, that liberty which consisteth in a freedom to either side—a freedom from all preponderating tendency and bias, in the state and circumstances of things, to one particular choice and action, rather than another—

cannot, in the nature of things, be essential to moral agency, virtue and vice.

Our Author saith, that sinners being abandoned and given up of God, implieth that they *once had a moral power to turn and live*. In order that the perspicuity and pertinency of this argument might appear, it was incumbent, I think, on our Author, to determine whether sinners are criminal or blameworthy for not returning unto God, *after they are abandoned*, &c. If they *are not*, their being *abandoned* lays no foundation for any increase of guilt and wickedness, nor at all inferreth any probability of it; but the contrary; and we must wait for farther explanation, in order to determine the meaning of the expression. If they *are* criminal and blameworthy for not turning unto God *after they are abandoned and given up of him*; then, by our Author's own concession, *moral inability* is not inconsistent with our ideas of virtue and vice, and desert of praise and blame.

It is very manifest, that the phrase of *being abandoned and given up of God*, as it hath been commonly used by Divines, carries with it the idea of some degree of *necessity*, of some kind or other, of the commission of sin; and, therefore, the consideration, that any action, or exercise of the human will, is the fruit and consequence of such necessity, by no means destroyeth the moral quality of it; nor is it consistent with its being morally evil and criminal in the sight of God.

But it may be now proper more particularly to inquire, whether our having idea or object *in view*, while yet in a state of perfect indifference of will, and without all degrees of *bias* and *inclination* of mind, is a supposition which would make it at all more conceivable or supposable that we should *originate* our own inclinations and voluntary exertions, than if we were, immediately preceding the exercises of our will, in a state of perfect imperceptivity; as unconscious as the air we breathe, or the earth we walk on. It is to be remembered, that, by the supposition, this view of
object

object hath not the least tendency in it to determine the will, or excite or engage the affection. Such a tendency as this, in that intellectual view of object which is utterly without affection, is as inconsistent with a power of self-motion, self-determination, in men, as that very doctrine of necessity which is so obnoxious to our Author. Such a tendency would imply, that volition ariseth, at least in part, from some external influence; and would infer a degree of *connexion* with some antecedent, extrinsic cause; and, therefore, a certain degree of *necessity* of its existence: both which are perfectly repugnant to all ideas of that sovereignty over our own wills, which must certainly be implied in a power of *self-motion*, *self-determination*. For any one to urge mere idea, or view of object, in which mankind are perfectly passive, as a reason by which to account for a power of *self-motion* and *self-determination* in men, is at once to confute himself, and give up his own argument; as it placeth the cause of the determination of volition in something extrinsic of the will itself; connecting it with something wherein man is acknowledged to be entirely passive. The very attempt, indeed, of any person of these principles, to give a *reason* for human volition, at once confuteth his own sentiments; as it implieth, that volition is an *effect* which standeth in need of a *cause* to be the ground and support of its existence, equally with other dependent and created things.

It is acknowledged, that mere intellectual perception of object is entirely distinct from the exertion of the power in question: yea, and that the mind often chooseth, and exerteth this *self-motive* power in direct opposition to that propriety, that fitness and suitability in objects, which are apprehended by the judgment and understanding. * (See p. 15, 16. marg.)

And

* As an argument in favour of the liberty in question, our Author quoteth Dr. Clarke, in his fourth reply to Leibnitz, where he saith, that "*Intelligent beings*" are *agents*; not *passive* in being moved by *motives*, as a *balance* is by *weights*; but they have *active powers*, and do move themselves, sometimes upon the view of *strong motives*, sometimes upon *weak ones*, and sometimes where things are

" absolutely

And certainly a propriety and fitness in things, which is not the least regarded in the determination of the will, can no more be a ground and reason of those determinations, than if the idea of propriety did not exist in the mind, and the mind was wholly unconscious both of object and fitness. It is, therefore, as supposable (and, upon our Author's principles, must be acknowledged to be so) that voluntary motion and exertion should arise instantaneously and immediately out of non-entity, without the operation and influence of any extrinsic cause, as that it should take place in a mind which hath idea and object in view, without the concurrence and influence of any such cause.

If it should be said, that it is not pretended that human volitions take place in the same manner as any event must be conceived to do (were any such thing possible) which should start into life and being immediately out of non-existence, without the concurrence of any extrinsic cause; but that MAN, who is created and upheld every moment by the mighty power of God, is the proper author and cause of his own volitions; such a supposition would not at all relieve the opinion of a power of self-motion, self-determination, from the difficulties which embarrass it; nor would it

in
 "absolutely *indifferent*. In which *latter case* there may be *very good reason* to
 "act, though two or more *ways* of acting may be absolutely *indifferent*." To
 "which observation of the Doctor Mr. Leibnitz in his fifth paper replieth: "It
 "must also be considered, that, properly speaking, motives do not *act* upon the
 "mind, as weights do upon a balance; but it is rather the mind that acts by
 "virtue of the motives, which are *its dispositions* to act. And therefore to pre-
 "tend, as the Author does here, that the mind prefers sometimes weak motives
 "to strong ones, and even that it *prefers* that which is *indifferent* before motives;
 "this, I say, is to divide the *mind* from the *motives*, as if they were *without* the
 "mind, as the weight is distinct from the balance; and as if the *mind* had, be-
 "sides *motives*, other *dispositions* to act, by virtue of which it could *reject* or *accept*
 "the *motives*. Whereas, in truth, the *motives* comprehend *all* the *dispositions*
 "which the mind can have to act voluntarily; for they *include* not only the *rea-*
 "sons, but also the *inclinations* arising from passions, or other preceding impres-
 "sions. Wherefore if the mind should prefer a weak *inclination* to a strong one,
 "it would act against itself, and otherwise than it is *disposed* to act. Which
 "shows that the Author's notions, contrary to mine, are superficial, and appear
 "to have no solidity in them, when they are well considered. To assert, also,
 "that the *mind* may have *good reasons* to act, when it has no *motives*, and *when*
 "things are absolutely *indifferent*, as the Author explains himself here; this, I
 "say, is a manifest contradiction: for if the mind has *good reasons* for taking the
 "part it takes, then the things are not *indifferent* to the mind." (Papers be-
 "tween Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clarke. p. 121. and 167. 169.)

in the least assist us in forming any ideas and conceptions of the power in question, its properties, or the law and manner of its operation.

If man is the *author* and *cause* of his own volitions, it is unquestionable that he must, in some way, exert himself *in order to produce them*. *Cause* always takes place and is exerted previous to the existence of its effect. If man is the *cause* of his own acts of will, he must exercise some power in order to produce these acts. That which *doth nothing—exerteth nothing in order to an effect*, and so, of course, *antecedent to the effect—hath nothing in it of that relation which we mean to express by the word cause*; and is stript of every thing whereby it is fitted for being the *reason* of an event. If man, therefore, is the *cause* of his own volitions, he must be so *by some exertion*. To represent him to be the *cause* of his own acts of will, otherwise than by any exertion, is to bring into view a *cause* of such a singular and peculiar nature, as containeth in it no manner of reason for the existence of its effect. If man is the *cause* of his own volitions, *by some exertion* of his own; it must be an exertion which is either *voluntary*, or *involuntary*. If the exertion, by which man is the *cause* of his own acts of will, is *voluntary*; then this exertion itself is *an act of the will*;—there being no just ground of any distinction between *an act of the will*, and *voluntary exertion*. And, consequently, this exertion of man, whereby he is the cause of his own acts of will, is itself the very effect, of which we are endeavouring to explore the cause, in man. To say that man, by his own free, voluntary exertions, produceth and is the cause of his own acts of will—free, voluntary exertions—makes not the least advances toward a solution of the question, “What is the *cause* of an act or exertion of the will?” nor at all assisteth us in exploring it. To suppose this exertion of men, whereby they beget and produce their own volitions, to be *involuntary*, and to have no exercise of will in it, would be attended with several difficulties. For,

1. Such

1. Such an exertion as this must imply some faculty or power in human nature, which hath never yet been discovered ; but hath hitherto escaped the notice and observation of the most subtile and critical inquirer. It is not the faculty of *understanding* : for, with the dictates of this faculty, it is acknowledged, the *choice* of the mind is, in no degree, connected ; being often in opposition to them. And *that*, surely, cannot be the *cause* of an event, the whole influence of which (all the influence which it is, by the nature of it, fitted to have) is utterly resisted by the event. And what *powers* there are, in human nature, for any to exert, beside those of understanding and will, we must wait to be informed by such as urge, that all the acts of our wills are the effects of our own exertions.

2. To suppose that some human exertion, which is without volition and properly distinct from it, is yet the *cause* of acts of will in us ; is to suppose volition to be not only connected with *some* antecedent cause, but *that* such an one as is entirely *involuntary*, and therefore *necessary*, with all that necessity which can be predicated of any mere natural effect. This is at once inconsistent with all the ideas of liberty given by our Author, and utterly subversive of a power of self-motion, self-determination.

3. If volition is an effect of such human exertion as is *without volition*, it must, of consequence, be an exertion in which *man* is not an agent. How any man should exert himself and be an agent in any thing wherein he hath no exercise of will and voluntary choice, is quite inconceivable. Nor is it less difficult to give a reason why such an exertion should be attributed unto him as *his own act*. If the exertion, which is the *cause* of an act of will in man, is without any act or agency of man's will in it ; it must, of consequence, be an exertion in which man is entirely and perfectly passive ; and, therefore, an exertion which can, with no propriety, be termed *our action*. And if it is a *cause*, in the exercise and operation of which man is passive

passive and involuntary ; it may as well be *external* as *internal*, as to any advantage mankind can ever reap from it, or any *improvement* it makes in liberty, by removing it farther from necessity.

If the power, which mankind are supposed to have over their own wills, and to *produce* acts and exertions of will in themselves, hath no degree of choice, preference or volition in it ; it *may be* that it never will beget, or produce, choice. And a man may exercise his *sovereignty* over his own will, to as little purpose as a poor beggar, covered with rags, exerts his sovereign authority over kingdoms and realms, which his sick, disordered brain hath made him imagine are subject to his sole command and arbitrary will. *That* must surely be a very miserable and impotent sort of a power over the will, which, in its utmost strength of exertion, will never produce the least degree of volition, or choice—volition and choice being, nevertheless, under some other and more effectual law of operation. And yet it is not at all surprising, that this sovereign power over the will should never bring the least degree of volition or choice into existence ; because, by the supposition, it is never exerted *with any such design and choice*, or put forth *for any such purpose*. It is altogether inconceivable how *that* power of will should, in any wise, account for the taking place of *choice*, and volition, which hath no greater tendency to such an event than to its contrary, even in the utmost strength of its exertion ; and which, indeed, doth not *prefer* choice, or tend to it more than to its opposite.

Whoever speaketh of a self-originating motion in the mind of man, or of an exercise of will begun by itself, conveys no manner of idea beyond that of the bare exercise of volition and motion. There is something, in the very nature of things, repelling every idea of any thing farther in men, and resisting every conception of it : the very idea (if I may so call it) of a power of self-motion, self-determination, in vari-

ous ways destroying itself, every way militating against itself and its own existence, and entirely shutting itself out of the world.

Nothing farther, it appears to me, can be said, to define this self-determinating power of the will, than, that the nature and quality of volition is to be *determined* by something which is to be found in volition itself, and belonging to it : just as we say, that a certain disposition of equal lines *determines* or *constitutes* a square ; and equal distance from a centre, a circle. In such a sense as this, both a square and a circle are determined by themselves ; i. e. *self-determined*. If this is what Gentlemen mean by a self-determining power, they will, probably, have no one to contend with them. If they intend any thing farther, it must be something, of which no distinct, determinate idea can be formed ; and which, indeed, the very supposition of its being would shut out of existence.

That acts of will should be connected, in their existence, with some antecedent and extrinsic cause, and the agent be esteemed virtuous, or vicious, for exercises of will which take place in such a connexion ; is a sentiment, which, in our Author's opinion, is embarrassed with insuperable difficulties. The Ex—r supposeth, that if it might be admitted that men are the *voluntary, designing cause of those inward acts wherein the nature of virtue and vice consists*, this would unravel the mystery, and solve the whole difficulty. (See p. 67.) This, however, would be, at best, but running into one difficulty, in order to avoid another. It is here conceded, that the nature of virtue and vice consisteth in the *inward acts* of men : that is, as our Author doubtless meaneth, their volitions. But there can be no moral quality, either virtue or vice, in the volitions of men, unless they themselves are the voluntary, designing causes of them. This is our Author's argument ; than which, a more extraordinary, I presume, is no where to be found.

Will our Author insist, that none of our inward acts
are

are either virtuous, or vicious, unless they are the *effects* of our own *voluntary design*? If it is indeed so, the consequence is unavoidable, that the first in the series—that inward act which alone, on *his* principles, is self-originated, self-determined—can have no *moral quality* predicated of it: for this, it is to be remembered, is not the *effect* of our own voluntary design.

In order that any thing may be either virtuous or vicious, upon our Author's principles, it is necessary that it should be the effect of our own voluntary design. Whatever, therefore, is self-originated, and doth not arise out of such a cause, cannot have virtue or vice predicated of it. Consequently, that exercise which is original, and first in the series, self-determined and self-moved, being not the *effect* of voluntary design, nor connected with it, is utterly without virtue; and as perfectly free from all taint, or stain, of vice.

And yet, upon our Author's principles, it is essential to the very nature of virtue and vice, that the volitions of agents should be utterly unconnected with all antecedent cause. Therefore those volitions, which are the *effects* of our own free, voluntary design, being, in their nature, connected with some antecedent cause, are consequently destitute of all degrees of virtue and vice.

Nor are these the only ways in which our Author's sentiments are inconsistent with the very being either of virtue or vice. For it is a favourite sentiment of his, that there is no more in the effect, than in its cause. He says (p. 58.) "There is no evading the consequence, indeed, that the whole guilt of men's evil dispositions is chargeable on God, not themselves, or on blind necessity and fatality, if the things Mr. Edwards advanceth be true."—Meaning, doubtless, what he advanceth in proof of an established, unfailing connexion between all events or effects, and some antecedent cause. Those volitions, therefore, which are the *effects* of our own voluntary design,

sign, cannot, *for this very reason*, have either virtue or predicated of them. Further,

“There being no more in the effect, than in its cause,” it is, upon the principle I am considering, ridiculous to speak of those volitions which are the effects of such an act of the will as doth not arise out of a *former* voluntary design (it being itself *first* and *original* in the series) as having moral quality in it, or being capable of virtue or vice. The *self-moved, self-determined* act of will, is neither virtuous nor vicious, because it is not the *fruit* or *effect* of our own voluntary design. That which is the *effect* of our *original, first* voluntary design, cannot be virtuous or vicious, for this reason, viz. That there was no virtue nor vice in its *cause*. So that, upon the whole, nothing can be more irrational, inconsistent and absurd, than to suppose that there can be any such thing, in the universe, as we mean to express by the terms *virtue* and *vice*. That original voluntary design, which is the *cause* of our own inward acts, cannot be, itself, vicious, for this obvious reason, viz. That it doth not arise out of a *vicious cause*. Those inward acts, which are the *effects* of our own voluntary design, cannot be vicious, for two reasons: The first is, that they are *effects*—not self-originated, self-moved; the second is, that (there being no more in the effect than in its cause) they did not arise out of a *vicious cause*.

Thus doth it appear, that the idea of self-motion, self-determination, that is, a motion originated by itself, and by its own causal influence brought into existence, is “in itself as evidently and clearly a contradiction, as that two and two should make five,” or any other the most absurd and contradictory supposition that can be named. And therefore, though challenged in so high a tone, by so great a man as Dr. Clarke, we shall not be “ashamed” utterly to deny that there is, or ever was, or can be, any such thing; or, that any man ever had an idea of it. And here, if I might be allowed, I would transcribe a sentence from

from the Doctor, and apply it to the present case. His words are these, "A man of any considerable modesty would be almost tempted rather to doubt the truth of his faculties, than to take upon him to assert one such intolerable absurdity, merely for avoiding another." (ed. 8. p. 85.)

From such a description and representation of those internal exercises and motions which are, alone, in the sense of these Gentlemen, the subjects of moral desert:—That they must be the *fruit* and *effect* of our own voluntary design; yet *self-originated*, *self-moved*:—That, in order to their being denominated morally evil, they must *arise out of an evil cause, and be the effects of it*; and yet, in order to their being denominated morally evil, it is absolutely necessary that they should be *utterly unconnected with any extrinsic, antecedent cause*:—That their moral evil doth not consist in the *nature* of them, but their *cause*; and yet that they have nothing beside their *nature* predicable of them; out of themselves, and distinguishable from their peculiar *nature*, they having *no cause*:—And, finally, that if they are *not caused* by our own voluntary design, they cannot be justly chargeable with moral evil; and yet if they *are caused by any thing* out of themselves, they can, *for that very reason*, have no moral evil predicated of them:—I say, from such descriptions and definitions, as these, of those kinds of exercises and motions which alone are capable of moral desert, what can any one think—what can the world of mankind conclude—but that all our ideas of *morality* are imaginary and vain, and the very terms *virtue* and *vice*, empty and insignificant?—That the very ideas of moral evil and sin are the offspring of the frightened imaginations and disordered brain of ignorant, pedantic recluses, educated in the gloomy vale of superstition and ignorance—prejudices from which the mind can be unfettered only by breathing the freer air of social pleasure, and thus opening and expanding, to receive more noble and liberal ideas and sentiments
of

of things? What less, than to eradicate from the minds of men those uneasy apprehensions, which, notwithstanding all the arts of *philosophy*, will many times get possession of them, can people in general apprehend to be the design of Gentlemen, who, in their definitions of moral evil, make use of such nice, subtle and peculiar distinctions—shifting and changing, and affirming and denying, in the very same breath, one and the same thing? According to such like reasonings as these, who but must apprehend that the natural notions of men, concerning moral good and evil, are an effect of that extraordinary machinery which is supposed by a late writer * to have been introduced by the wise Author of Nature, that we might receive a nice and *artificial* set of feelings, merely for the sake of giving conscience a commanding power and influence.

But it seemeth unnecessary any farther to pursue the argument; especially since the objections made by Mr. Edwards against a power of self-determination in men, and his clear, nervous and conclusive reasoning and argumentation against the possibility of any such power, are by our Author passed over in silence, and left in their full strength.

But before I finish the section, I beg to be indulged in a conjecture concerning the rise and origin of the notion of this mysterious, incomprehensible power in men. I cannot but apprehend, that the opinion arose from a degree of abstraction, in the ideas of men, of *exercises* from *agents*; which is a refinement far above vulgar understandings, if not above truth itself. From this abstracted idea of *action*, we have been taught to look upon *the agent* as one thing—his *action*, as another:—For what can be more absurd, say they, than to talk of an *exercise*, without *something* to act?—an *action* without an *agent*? Hence men have been led to consider an *action* and *the agent*, as it were, different substances: the one, the *cause*; the other, the *effect*. But it is far from being true, that *action* (I mean mental,

* Lord Kaimes's essay on the principles of morality, &c. See p. 211.

tal, voluntary exercise) and *agent* may justly be considered under these different predicaments, and as sustaining the different relations to each other which we mean to express by the terms *cause* and *effect*. The *action* of a man noteth only a certain *mode* of his existence ; it being merely an *accident*, of which man is the *subject*. There is as little reason in considering man and his *exercise* as distinct things, sustaining the different relations to each other of *cause* and *effect*, as there is for making a like distinction between *body* and *its motion* : treating of the former, as *cause* ; the latter, as *effect*.

If *agent* and *action* do not admit of that relative distinction to each other, which we mean to express by the terms *cause* and *effect*, it is perfectly unmeaning and unintelligible to speak of an agent as being the designing cause of his own voluntary exercises and actions. We may with equal propriety speak of the air, as the *cause* of the wind which bloweth ; or of the sea, as the *cause* of the fluctuation of its waves. Man may, according to the common use of terms, be properly styled the *voluntary, designing cause* of such outward events or effects, as are immediately connected with the choice and preference of his mind, which we commonly term *external actions*. But it is only in an indirect, figurative sense, that any *external, outward* event whatsoever can be called *our action* ; and only on account of its special relation to something which is, in the strict sense, *our action*. Nothing beside our own voluntary exertions are, strictly speaking, *our action*. Herein alone are we agents—are we active. And for us to consider our volitions as the *effects* of our own voluntary design, would be only to make volition the effect of volition—the effect of itself ; or to place moral evil, not in volition itself, but in the agent its *cause*. According to which principle, moral evil must be sought in something which is antecedent to volition, and entirely distinct from it ; and, therefore, not in the *voluntary, designing cause* of it.

But

But if it is indeed so that there is no ground for abstracting *action* from *agent* (meaning by *action*, internal, voluntary exercise and exertion) any more than there is for abstracting *accident* from its *subject*, or *motion* from the body *moved*; it will certainly follow, that such a relative distinction, as we mean to express by the words *cause* and *effect*, doth not subsist between *agent* and his *action*. And there must be as great and evident an impropriety of speech, in saying that men are the *causes* of their own actions, as in saying that the loadstone is the cause of its magnetism, or sugar of its sweetness.

If men had not considered moral, voluntary exertion in a degree of abstraction quite unphilosophical and inconceivable, I must beg leave to say, that moral agents never would have been thought of, as the *voluntary, designing causes* of their own *volitions*; any more than a subject, of its accidents; or *being*, of its existence. And when it is once considered, that *agent* and *his action* do not bear the relation to each other of *cause* and *effect*; then, probably, the *cause* of volition will no longer be thought to belong to the inquiry into the nature of that moral agency, or liberty, which is essential to virtue and vice, praise and blame.*

Having thus proved, as I apprehend, the perfect inconsistency of the notion of a power of self-determination in men; the consequence clearly is, that all exercises of human volition arise wholly from some extrinsic cause. And as it will probably be granted, on this hypothesis, that all causes derive their influence ultimately from God; I beg leave to take this for granted, and shall build several of my arguments, in the second part of this Treatise, on this supposition.

SECT. VI.

* "Obj. Whence came this *moral impotency*?——What have you to do, to ask this here?——You have no need to ask it for the understanding of what I have spoken. It can stand on its own legs, without flying to that foreign, or remote help.——Let it come which way it will, you see it doth not excuse; and so do all men, whatsoever they may say to the contrary."——Trueman's Discourse of Natural and Moral Impotency. page 142.

SECT. VII.

Wherein it is shown; that the doctrine of an infallible previous certainty of all human volitions doth not imply that mankind are but mere machines.

THE advocates for a power of self-determination in men loudly exclaim against the doctrine of an antecedent infallible certainty of the voluntary exercises of men, as being utterly inconsistent with all ideas of moral liberty; subjecting all the actions of mankind to the *severe, rigid laws of absolute fate*; making the mind of man but a curious piece of mere machinery, and all the exercises of it no other than mechanical motions. This is a weapon which hath been used with as much success, perhaps, in defence of a power of self-determination in men, as any with which the advocates for such a power have combated the opposite opinion. This is an objection against the doctrine of a previous certainty of all events, frequently and repeatedly urged by our Author. (See p. 61, 82, 83, 84, 85, 124.) And he represents this doctrine as inferring a *necessity* as utterly inconsistent with all ideas of a praise-worthy or criminal action, as even *natural necessity*: a necessity inconsistent with the moral perfections of God, and making him "the almighty minister of fate." (See p. 81—2—3.) Here he dissents from Dr. Clarke. The Doctor distinguisheth between *natural* and *moral necessity*: this distinction our Author expressly denieth (p. 81.) And his argument (p. 61.) is founded on the same supposition. But upon the very supposition of an absolute moral necessity, such an one as inferreth as infallible a certainty as any natural necessity which can be conceived of; it is, that the Doctor founds his demonstrative arguments of the moral attributes and perfections of God. He saith (p. 116. edit. 8.) that "'tis evident He (God) must

R

"cf

“ of necessity do always what he knows to be *fittest* to
 “ be done.” And in p. 118. he saith expressly, that
 the “ moral attributes” (of the Deity) “ are really
 “ and truly necessary, by such a necessity, as, though it
 “ be not at all inconsistent with liberty, yet is equally
 “ certain, infallible, and to be depended upon, as even
 “ the existence itself, or the eternity of God.”

So the Doctor alloweth, that *moral necessity* is evidently consistent with *natural liberty*; and, that it is *morally impossible* for a person, free from all pain and disorder of body and mind, to endeavour to hurt himself; and saith expressly, that it is *morally impossible* for him to choose to do it. “ Which also,” continues he, “ is the very same reason why the most perfect
 “ rational creatures superior to men cannot do evil:
 “ not because they want a *natural power* to perform
 “ the material action; but because it is *morally impossible*, that, with a perfect knowledge of what is best,
 “ and without any temptation to evil, their will should
 “ determine itself to choose or act foolishly and unreasonably.” (See p. 100 of his *Demonstration*, &c. edit. 8.) How consistent this is with a power of *self-determination* in men, I leave to every one to judge. The same necessity is allowed by the Doctor, p. 68, 115, 117, &c. And he saith (p. 119.) that it is as absolutely *impossible* for God to act contrary to his *moral* attributes, as to divest himself of his *natural* ones. And many of his arguments, and clear, just reasonings, are founded upon the supposed consistency of freedom and liberty with *moral necessity*.

And that the will of creatures should be *necessarily determined* by something out of itself, is so far from being inconsistent with praise-worthiness and virtue, in the Doctor's view of things, that it is a certain proof of wickedness and vice, for the will not to be influenced and governed by something *ab extra*. He saith (p. 186, 187, 188.) “ And by this understanding or knowledge of the natural relations and fitnesses of things, the *wills* likewise of intelligent beings
 “ are

“are constantly directed, and must needs be determined to act accordingly ; excepting those only, who will things to be what they are not, and cannot be ; that is, whose wills are corrupted by particular interest or affection, or swayed by some unreasonable and prevailing passion.” Again, “For, originally and in reality, ’tis as natural and (morally speaking) necessary, that the will should be determined in every action by the reason of things, and the right of the case ; as it is natural and, absolutely speaking, necessary that the understanding should submit to a demonstrated truth.” Here the Doctor certainly sheweth himself a friend to the doctrine of fate, as far as this doctrine is implied in moral necessity, and a fixed, infallible certainty of all events ; however he may express his disinclination to it elsewhere.

If mankind would only distinguish carefully the ideas which they annex to the terms, *moral exercise* and *mechanical motion*, I cannot but think that the objection against a previous infallible certainty of all events, as well moral, as natural—that such a doctrine supposeth men to be but mere machines, and all their internal exercises no other than mechanical motions—would lose all its plausibility with mankind, and appear utterly unworthy to fall from the pen of a philosopher.

By *moral exercise* we mean that affection of mind, of which we are conscious in our views of moral things : Or, whenever we feel either love or hatred, &c. in the view of any character, or moral truth ; then we put forth a *moral exercise*, and perform a *moral action*. This is the idea, which, I believe, is generally entertained of *moral exercise and action* ; and which needeth no farther explanation, as it is something of which every one hath a consciousness within himself, and daily experienceth in his own breast.

On the other hand : *Mechanical motion* is that which, in the subject, is without either will, consciousness, perception or design. Whatever motion we behold, which appeareth to be utterly involuntary and undesigning,

we consider as altogether *mechanical*—a motion arising wholly from some external influence and operation; being *without the least degree of voluntary inclination and design*. Thus we term the motions of the earth, and other bodies which compose the material system, *mechanical*. And after the same manner do we speak of the ascending of vapours, the blowing of the winds, the motions of clocks, watches, &c. The effects which we behold in these natural bodies, we never consider as the fruit of any voluntary intention, meditation or design, in the bodies themselves which are the subjects of these visible effects; but the changes and alterations which we observe in them, we consider as the mere effects of some external influence and force. These, it appears to me, are the ideas which men generally have of *moral exercises*, and of *mechanical motions*: ideas as distinct from each other, as *voluntary* and *involuntary*, *designing* and *undesigning*.

If these definitions are just, can any thing be more unreasonable than to consider voluntary, designing agents, as but mere machines, because there is an antecedent ground or reason of their mental exercises and volitions? When men are *agents* in any thing, is not this a sufficient reason why they should be praised or blamed, according as the action is either morally good or evil?—And that, even though there *was* an antecedent cause or reason of the action, in the operation and influence of which they themselves, were not agents or active? Are men in any measure the less voluntary, active and designing, in their mental and moral exercises, because of any antecedent ground or reason there may be of these their mental exercises, in the influence and operation of which reason, cause or ground, they themselves are not designing and voluntary? As well might we say that the moral being *man*, because for his existence he is wholly dependent on God, and is entirely the workmanship of God, is but a mere machine. And if men are not the less voluntary by reason of any previous cause there is of their mental

tal

ral inclinations and exertions ; why is the opinion that there is, in fact, an antecedent cause, ground and reason of all the voluntary exercises of men, in the operation and influence of which for the production of volition, mankind are not themselves active and voluntary ; exclaimed against as containing the heathenish, atheistical notion of fate, and making mankind, though curious, yet, but mere machines ? * If the proper distinction between *moral exercises* and *mechanical motions*, is, that the former are voluntary and designing, the latter, without will and without design ; then surely there is no foundation for the objection under consideration ; nor can any use be made of it, except in exclamation and popular harangues, and applications, not to the reason, but to the imaginations of men.

It hence appeareth that man may be called *an agent*, and justly be considered as the *doer* or *actor* of any thing, even though he is not the positive, efficient *cause* of his own voluntary exertion ;—or though he is not *active* or *influential* in the operation of that *cause*, which hath for its *effect*, voluntary exertion :—And this with as much propriety as a man may be said to *live* and *exist*, though he is in no degree the cause of his own life and existence. This our Author alloweth ; (p. 64.) but thinks his adversary is necessarily entangled in this consequence, that God is the positive cause and foundation of sinful volition. He says, “ if he” (man) “ is only the *subject*, the *doer*, the *actor* of sins—who “ then is the *positive cause* and *fountain* of it ?” The great objection, that God is the positive cause and fountain of wickedness, shall be considered in its proper place. ALL that is of importance to the inquiry immediately under consideration, is, whether men are not criminal and blameworthy for *doing* and *acting* wickedness ?

* Dr. Whitby on the five points exclaims loudly against the doctrine of an established connexion in things, as containing the heathenish, atheistical doctrine of *fate*. See Discourse 4. Chap. 4. throughout. And yet this same Author alloweth men to be *passive* in receiving ideas, and in having impressions made on their understandings. See p. 121, 122, 393. And very manifestly concedeth, yea urgeth a *connexion* of will with the views and dictates of the understanding. How far he is herein consistent with himself, I leave the reader to judge.

wickedness? And whether, after it is conceded that, even upon supposition of a previous, infallible certainty of the volitions of men, they are the *doers* and *actors* of wickedness, there can be any reason or room for the objection, that the doctrine of such an infallible previous certainty of all events, makes men but mere machines, and borders too much upon the atheistical notion of *fate*, to be entertained by Christian divines? If it is once granted that it is criminal to be the *doers*, the *actors* of wickedness; the grand objection against the Calvinistic doctrine respecting the divine decrees, predestination, &c. &c. that it makes men but mere machines, vanisheth, and loseth all its force: and the labouring point of debate will be, not the consistency of moral liberty, with an established connexion in things; but where the fountain and source is, of this previous certainty and established connexion in things; and whether the *cause* of sinful *action* is also itself sinful.

But was it ever questioned by any one, whether the *doer*, the *actor* of wickedness, is deserving of contempt and blame? Is it necessary that we should be first infallibly determined respecting an antecedent certainty of our own wicked *deeds* and *actions*, before there can be any room—any rational ground for taking shame and blame to ourselves? Do we ever wait to have this point made evident and plain, before we venture to censure and cast blame upon others for the wickedness they *transact* and *commit*? Must it be evident beyond contradiction that man is the *fountain*, the *positive source* and *cause* from whence his evil volitions arise as *effects*, before we may venture to pronounce any one criminal and guilty? Nothing is more evident than that this is not agreeable to the common practice and universal custom of men.

But, after all, if it were in fact the case, and could easily be made so to appear, that mankind are the *sources*, the *positive cause* of their own voluntary exertions; this would, by no means, answer the objector's purpose;

pose ; but would leave him still involved in the same difficulty which, in his view, embarrasseth the doctrine of a previous, infallible certainty of all events. For if man is the positive cause of his own acts of will, then, certainly, upon the objector's plan, acts of will are but mere effects ;—and such, too, as are absolutely and infallibly connected with their *positive* (and I might justly add) *involuntary cause* :—which certainly *vergeth* upon the obnoxious doctrine of fate.

Besides, if man is the *designing* cause of his own volitions, it must doubtless be that he is so by a *voluntary* design ; and *this*, also, the effect of a *former* voluntary design, and so on, until we come to the volition which is original and first, without any going before it. And this first, original volition must be either an event without *any* cause ; or arise from some foreign, extrinsic cause ; which again, upon the objector's principles, introduceth the *gloomy, tyrannical* doctrine of fate. For volition to arise out of no cause whatsoever, and be an event for which there is absolutely no reason and ground, is as inconsistent with liberty and freedom, as the opinion of an antecedent certainty of all events. For upon the objector's principles, it is necessary that volition should arise out of a free cause. For volition to arise out of no cause, and thus be an event absolutely unaccountable and for which no possible reason can be given, makes it as undesigning and necessary, as the supposition of its absolute, infallible connexion with some extrinsic cause. For it to arise out of *any* cause, as its effect, supposeth it, upon our Author's principles, to be a motion which is merely mechanical. But it being a maxim with the Ex—r, that there is no more in the effect than in its cause, to suppose that volition ariseth out of man's voluntary design, as its cause, will make man himself but a mere machine. So that, even upon the objector's own principles, as truly as on ours, man, however curious, is yet but a mere machine.

There is no way, upon the principles of Gentlemen
who

who urge such objections as these, for any one to become really blame-worthy and criminal, unless he is the cause—the positive source and efficient author—of his own whole existence : all dependency for life, being or exercise, involving in it the *absurd, inconsistent doctrine of fate*. And it is indeed quite as conceivable, that a creature should be the positive, voluntary, designing cause of his whole existence, as of any part of it ; or, that a subject should be the *cause* of its own accidents.

I think, therefore, while it is allowed, as it certainly must be, that, even upon the doctrine of a certain, established connexion in things, men are *doers—actors* of wickedness ; and that they *exert* acts of will—*exercise* voluntary design ; there can be no weight in the objection, that, upon this hypothesis, they are but mere machines. It must be manifest to every one, who will attentively consider the matter, that we use the word *mechanical*, not to express the connexion of any thing with some antecedent cause, ground or reason of its existence ; but merely to note the quality of an effect, as being without voluntary intention and design. The word *mechanical* is not used to denote the *relation* of effect, but the *nature* and *quality* of it, as being without will and without design. So that although all events may equally sustain the *relation* of effects, yet they are not all *mechanical* ; some being voluntary and designing ; others, without intention, or design.

If by FATE is meant a blind, undesigning necessity of events ; every impartial, candid mind will easily discover the unreasonableness of charging the doctrine of an antecedent, infallible certainty of all events, as favouring of the antient, heathenish opinion of fate. But if by the term, as used by modern divines, be meant nothing more than an *infallible, previous certainty* of every, even the most minute, event which ever taketh place in any part of the moral or natural system, I am willing, for my own part, to allow myself

a maintainer of the doctrine of fate* (though I greatly dislike the term ;) and shall think myself sufficiently kept in countenance by the greatest philosophers in all ages, as well heathen as christian—by the most eminent divines in the early ages of the church—by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster—and, finally, by the holy scriptures themselves, which most fully and strongly assert the unpopular doctrines of predestination, and the absoluteness and universality of the divine decrees. *These* are the doctrines which, there is abundant reason to think, are, at bottom, so disgustful and unpleasing to men ; and which are meant to be secretly wounded by the hard names of *necessity* and *fate*.

S E C T. VIII.

Wherein the Ex—r's reasonings, in several parts of his performance which have not yet been taken notice of, are particularly considered.

THOUGH I am humbly of opinion that what Mr. Edwards hath said directly upon the subject of *the government and determination of the will by motives*, is not altogether correct, but liable to some of the exceptions which the Ex—r hath taken against it ; still,

S it

* Mr. Leibnitz, in his fifth paper to Dr. Clarke, in answer to the Doctor's charge against him of maintaining the doctrine of fate, saith, "As to the notion of fatality, which the Author lays also to my charge, this is another ambiguity. There is a *fatum mahometanum*, a *fatum stoicum*, and a *fatum christianum*. The *Turkish fate* will have an effect to happen, even though its cause should be avoided ; as if there was an absolute necessity. The *Stoical fate* will have a man to be quiet, because he must have patience, whether he will or not, since it is impossible to resist the course of things. But 'tis agreed that there is a *fatum christianum*, a certain destiny of every thing, regulated by the foreknowledge and providence of God. *Fatum* is derived from *fari* ; that is, to pronounce, to decree ; and, in its right sense, it signifies the decree of providence. And those who submit to it through a knowledge of the divine perfections, whereof the love of God is a consequence, have not only patience, like the heathen philosophers, but are also contented with what is ordained by God, knowing that he does every thing for the best ; and not only for the greatest good in general, but also for the greatest particular good of those that love him." See a Collection of papers which passed between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clarke, p. 163, 165.

it appears to me, he hath not treated that eminent Author, in many respects, with that justice and candour which distinguish the lovers of truth, and the upright and honest inquirers after it. I shall instance in a few particulars :

1. The Ex—r hath very particularly and expressly condemned him, as being in alliance, in sentiment, with *fatalists*, *epicurians* and *atheists*, because he maintains the opinion of an absolute previous certainty and infallible connexion in things, and expressly denieth a power of self-determination in men ; and yet has taken no notice of the arguments by which Mr. Edwards supporteth his own opinion, and refutes those of his adversary. It is remarkable, that, through our Author's whole performance, there is nothing said to expose the sophistry of the arguments which Mr. Edwards hath made use of in proof of an infallible antecedent certainty of all events, and shew the weakness and futility of them ; and that his clear and very striking reasonings, against a power of self-determination in men, are wholly passed over in silence. Herein, it appears to me, our Author hath done justice, neither to Mr. Edwards, nor to himself. Not to Mr. Edwards ; in supposing that some incorrectness of expression, or even sentiment, respecting *the influence of motives upon the human will*, so to weaken the force of his arguments for the grand point in debate between the Calvinists and Arminians, as to render them unworthy of any farther notice, or reply : Nor to *himself*, in not giving arguments, of such peculiar perspicuity and strength, any greater weight in his own mind.

2. Our Author frequently asserts, that Mr. Edwards denieth *internal liberty*, or that the *will is free*. (See part I. sect. 3.) And saith, that it is contrary to the general doctrine of his book, that “ the acts of the will are free.” (See p. 67.) All that our Author can with justice found this charge against Mr. Edwards upon, is, his constantly denying, that acts of the will
are

are to be considered as the *fruit of our own pleasure* ; and, that *this* is a consideration necessary to either the virtuousness or viciousness of volitions. If by *free* is meant something which is the *fruit and consequence of the pleasure of the mind*, and that no act of the will is *free* unless it is the *effect of our own voluntary design*, Mr. Edwards did indeed deny internal freedom : but if by *free* is meant *voluntary* and *elective*, it will be obvious to any one, who shall take the trouble of attending to him, that he was very far from denying internal liberty and freedom. Such representations, by our Author, tend to give a wrong view and idea of the true and real sentiments of Mr. Edwards.

3. Our Author, I think, hath very manifestly perverted the meaning of the terms *natural* and *moral*, as applied to the abilities of men, from the sense in which Mr. Edwards obviously used them ; and would from thence infer, that, even upon that Author's own principles, the latter, as truly as the former, is inconsistent with all ideas of virtue and vice, praise and blame. That Author, in part 1. sect. 4. of his book, hath explained the phrases *natural* and *moral inability*, with great clearness and exactness. The former, he represents as being inconsistent with blame ; the latter, as in no degree removing the grounds of it. A *natural inability*, Mr. Edwards supposeth, implies resistance made to will and endeavours : a *moral inability* is nothing more than an indisposition of mind, a backwardness and strong aversion of will, to any exertion and endeavours. The former, he supposeth, precludes blame ; the latter, not. He is careful, however, to remind his readers, that though, in conformity to the common use of terms among men, he giveth the name *moral* to one of these kinds of inability, he doth not suppose that *nature* is wholly unconcerned even in such a kind of inability as is generally termed *moral* ; or, that there is not, extrinsic of the inability itself, a reason or ground of it, in the *nature* of things. In part 4. sect. 4. of his Inquiry, Mr. Edwards hath very

clearly shown the consistency of *such* an inability or necessity, as this, with our natural notions of *desert*; even though *nature* is concerned in it; whatever may be the incongruity of attributing either praise or blame, where *natural* necessity (according to the common and most obvious meaning of the term) taketh place. Because Mr. Edwards had said, that the *nature of things* is concerned in moral necessity (p. 31.) and admits that *moral*, is a species of *philosophical* necessity (p. 294.) the Ex—r pretends, that, upon Mr. Edwards's principles, and even *according to his own definitions*, there is a necessity in the volitions of men, which is utterly inconsistent with all our ideas of any desert of either praise or blame. Herein the Ex—r doth not give the real, obvious sense of the Author upon whom he animadverteth; but takes advantage, by varying the meaning of the term *nature* from the sense in which Mr. Edwards useth it, to represent him as being inconsistent, both with himself and with common sense, in an instance wherein, upon careful and candid examination, he will probably be found to be inconsistent with neither. Nothing farther need be said in reply to the remarks of our Author on this head, than to request the reader carefully to review Mr. Edwards's own reasonings upon the point, in the fore-mentioned sections.*

4. Mr.

* As some seem to think that Mr. Edwards uses the distinction of *natural* and *moral inability* in an unusual sense, and have charged him with introducing a new phraseology into the church, it may not be impertinent to quote a passage or two from Truman's Discourse of natural and moral impotency, written about a century ago.

This distinction (says he) of *natural* and *moral power*, or *impotency*, is not used to affirm or deny the coming or arising of one or either of them from *nature*: for I am not now speaking *de origine*, whence they arise; but to denote the species or kinds, and the essential difference of their nature, come they which way they will. That is a physical or natural habit or action, that is neither—laudable nor vituperable *in genere morum*; that a man can neither be counted good and honest, or bad and dishonest, for his agility or comeliness, dulness, blockishness, or acuteness; but may be (having such power, and doing accordingly) admired, though not praised; and for the defect of such power may be pitied, but not blamed or punished. And this impotency may be a punishment, but not a sin. The moral and ethical act or habit is just contrary. It is that which is laudable or vituperable, and that which a man may be looked on as honest or dishonest for. Now natural impotency is always, in this sense, of something that a man cannot do, if he would never so much; or hath not the very faculty of willing it.

The

4. Mr. Edwards hath insisted, that the virtuousness and viciousness of dispositions, habits of mind and inclinations, are to be sought wholly in these dispositions and inclinations themselves; and not, in any measure, in their cause. This doctrine of Mr. Edwards, the Ex—r representeth in such a manner and in such terms as greatly tend to betray unwary readers into very wrong and false apprehensions of the real opinion and sentiments of that eminent author. He says (p. 57.) “What doth it amount to? The plain truth is” (on Mr. Edwards’s principles) “that when we set ourselves to judge of human actions, we must have no consideration of the source of them, but entirely detach them from their causes. Be the efficient cause who or what it will, all we have to attend to, is the effect produced—by this we must estimate the goodness or wickedness of men—!” The term *action*, is most commonly applied to *external, bodily exertions*. It is a dictate of common sense, that, in judging of *actions*, in this sense of the term, we must look wholly to their *source*, and by *this only* estimate the goodness or wickedness of men. Mr. Edwards is so far from having said any thing inconsistent with this opinion, that he hath offered unanswerable arguments in support of it. And yet our Author hath expressed himself, on this head, in terms naturally adapted to persuade his less accurate and judicious readers, that Mr. Edwards was so weak as to imagine that the commendableness or criminality of the outward actions of men do not at all depend upon

The *moral* impotency is of something, that a man hath the natural faculty to will, or can do it if he would; but is hindered only by moral vicious habits from willing or doing it. (page 4.)

This *moral* impotency doth not excuse from fault, or make the threatenings unjust. Nay, it is also in this contrary to natural (which I would have you observe and consider well, to convince you of the great difference); that the natural impotency, the greater it is, by so much the more it doth lessen the fault in not obeying the command; and the less it is, by so much the more it doth greaten the fault. But the greater it [moral impotency] is, the greater is the fault, and more blame-worthy, and farther from excuse; and the less it is, the less faulty. (page 31.)

If any one desires to know whether Mr. Edwards’s language is new, and before unknown to the church, let him read this whole discourse of Trueman.

upon the internal purposes and designs from which the actions proceed. In this instance our Author, I apprehend, evadeth the force of Mr. Edwards's argument ; and hardly shews himself the candid, fair inquirer.

But will the Ex—r insist on the consequence which he supposeth to follow from these principles of Mr. Edwards ? He says, “ He, *therefore*, that with one “ original talent makes as great improvement as another with five, is no more praiseworthy—that is, “ is not *accepted according to that he hath*. He that “ offends against five degrees of light, originally given, is guilty in no higher degree than he who offends “ against but one degree of light.” I know not by what rule of reason our Author makes this inference. If the viciousness of any thing lieth in the nature of it, not in its cause ; is this a consideration, that at all diminisheth the difference between rebellion against different degrees of light ? Will our Author insist, also, that the *difference* between things actually existing, consisteth not in the *nature* of the things themselves, but in their *cause* ? There is nothing whereby we can determine the strength of any internal disposition, but by the degrees of difficulty it will overcome, or light against which it will rebel. If it requires greater strength of inclination and disposition to resist five degrees of light, than to resist one, there is certainly a higher degree of wickedness in resisting five, than in resisting one ; *especially* if the wickedness lieth in the *nature* of the disposition *exercised*, and not in its *cause*.

5. Our Author pretendeth to quote Mr. Edwards, as asserting that “ moral evil is not of a *bad, but good tendency*.” (p. 72.) For this he referreth his readers to part 4. sect. 9. of that Author's Inquiry. I have carefully examined that section, and can find no such assertion in it, or any thing akin to it. Mr. Edwards acknowledgeth, that, upon his principles, it must be granted, that the taking place of sin is a fruit and effect

effect of the divine permission and disposal. And to shew that this permission and disposal of divine providence are not inconsistent with the divine purity and holiness, and do not reflect upon the moral character of God, he asserts that there is *no bad tendency* in such permission and disposal. He saith (p. 375.) " 'Tis not of a *bad tendency*, for the supreme Being thus to order and permit that moral evil to be, which it is best should come to pass." This, any one may see, is a very different thing from saying that "*moral evil* is not of a bad, but good tendency." In this pretended quotation there is at least the appearance of dissimulation and unfairness. If our Author had carefully attended to the evident design and scope of the section upon which he is here remarking, I think he could not possibly have made so palpable a mistake. And by this means he might have spared himself the trouble of several of the next succeeding pages; and, of his pathetic exclamation on the supposed advantages of the most atrocious crimes that are committed here in our world, and the "base ingratitude" of mankind to these "their greatest benefactors."

6. Another instance wherein our Author, I apprehend, hath misrepresented the sentiments of Mr. Edwards, is, his charging him with placing the criminality and wickedness of a number and series of bad volitions *particularly* in that which is first and original in the series, on account of the inseparable connexion of all the succeeding ones, in the train, with it. This is the light in which our Author representeth him. (p. 48. 97.) For this sentiment in Mr. Edwards, he referreth his readers to p. 48. 224, 225. 266. 70, 71. Mr. Edwards indeed saith (p. 48.) "If the first act of the will, which determines and fixes the subsequent acts, be not free, none of the following acts, which are determined by it, are free." But by *free*, as he here useth the term, he manifestly intends the same as *self-determined*: and, by the chain of reasoning which he is here pursuing, would shew the inconsistency of men

men with themselves, even on their own principles, in pleading for a power of self-determination, as essential to moral liberty, virtue and vice ; and, that, according to their own definitions, it is utterly inconceivable that any act or exercise of the will should be free. Mr. Edwards, in p. 224. insists that the first and determining act, in a series and chain of volitions, is as truly the subject of command, as the consequent ones. And likewise tells us, that “ ’tis this *more especially* “ which is that which the command or precept has a “ proper respect to ; because it is this act which determines the whole affair ; in this act the obedience or “ disobedience lies in a more peculiar manner.” To me, indeed, there appeareth no reason for such a representation as this ; nor any ground for supposing the *first volition*, in any series or train of acts of the will, to be in a more peculiar manner the subject of command, than any of the subsequent ones. Yea, the reverse of this, in many cases, is most manifestly true. For, in a chain and series of volitions and exercises terminating on the same general object, the mind frequently exerteth itself with more strength and vigour in its subsequent exercises, than in that which is original and first in the series ; and which may, in some sense, be said to determine the rest. Certainly, it is not consistent with this Author’s own principles, to suppose that the *connexion* of subsequent acts of the will, with that which is first and original in the series, or the determination of the consequent acts by the antecedent, should be any reason for making the first *especially* the subject of precept and command ; or, for placing obedience or disobedience *in a peculiar manner* in the first, and not in those which follow it.

But in the other places referred to by our Author, it is manifest that when Mr. Edwards denieth freedom to be in consequent acts of the will, *because of their connexion with foregoing acts*, he doth it only upon the objector’s principles, in order to shew him his own inconsistency. If our Author had carefully kept Mr. Edwards’s

Edwards's design in view, he would not have represented him as so frequently placing the criminality and wickedness of a number and chain of volitions *particularly and especially* in that which is first and original in the series.

7. On the strength of the supposition, that every kind of necessity is equally inconsistent with our natural ideas of desert, of praise and blame, our Author chargeth Mr. Edwards (p. 83.) with being "caught in his own subtilty," and inadvertently sliding into the doctrine of fatalism, however he may have expressed his disinclination to it. What the Ex—r meaneth by *fatalism*, it is sufficiently evident, is not the necessary certainty of the divine existence and exercises, but the subjection of every event, yea of all intelligent existence, in every form and mode of it, to a necessity which is equally without will, without wisdom, and without design. "Upon this scheme" (Mr. Edwards's) saith our Author, "it follows, that the actions of all "finite beings are the agency of the Deity; and his, "not, properly speaking, *agency*, but instrumental—"ty—a subjection to blind necessity and fate." Mr. Edwards hath no where said or intimated, that the divine agency is the *fruit* and *effect* of any extrinsic, necessary cause; or, indeed, of any kind of necessity whatsoever: and where the Ex—r finds such a sentiment or conclusion contained in any thing that Author hath said in his Inquiry, I am at a loss to conceive. It is true, that Mr. Edwards supposeth the divine existence, even in every mode and manner of it, a *necessary* existence. If this is a doctrine "plainly on the side of fatality," we readily allow that his reasonings are on that side of the question. And if there is no way to escape the subtilties of that obnoxious doctrine, beside that of denying the *necessity* of the divine existence, it will at once be admitted that Mr. Edwards was caught in them. But would our Author, in order to avoid the doctrine of fate, deny the *absolute necessity* of the divine existence—a necessity taking place equally

T

in

in respect to the *exercises* as of the very *existence* of God ? Is this the sort of fatality which our Author so studiously avoideth, and at which he discovers so great a disgust ? If this is the case, the Ex—r's words respecting Mr. Edwards (p. 83.) with a little variation may justly be applied to himself. "However" our Author "hath exposed his disinclination to" atheism " (in which we doubt not his sincerity) we think his " reasoning is plainly on the side of" it ; " and suppose he was caught in his own subtilty." For if the divine existence and volition are not *necessarily what they are* ; and if there is not that supremacy, efficiency and power in him and in his government, as absolutely to *insure* the taking place of *every event*, under this government, exactly agreeable to the wise purpose and design of God ; it will be no longer worth while for *christian divines* to contest any points with *atheists* and *infidels* ; or, even to expect any *effectual* interposition in favour of the cause of righteousness and truth.

Upon the authority, notwithstanding, of Mr. Edwards's maintaining such a doctrine as this, our Author, with great freedom, ranks this eminent *christian divine*, with *heathen philosophers* and others who, he supposeth, harmonize with them in their doctrine of fate. And accordingly he hath, in the close of his performance, drawn a parallel between the sentiments of Mr. Edwards, and the doctrines of such as he imagineth have been abettors of those heathenish, unphilosophical tenets. He informs us, indeed (p. 130.) that he doth not suppose that the agreement of Mr. Edwards's doctrines with the sentiments of heathen philosophers proves them to be false. But if it was not his design that the consideration of the correspondence of Mr. Edwards's doctrine, with some things which are to be found in the writings of Hobbs, Spinoza, &c. should have *the weight* of an argument, with his more superficial readers ; it is difficult to find a reason why he exhibited this resemblance to the view of the publick, and subjoined his "specimen of coincidence"

vidence" to his other performance. This is an argument which will probably be of greater weight with many, to prejudice them against the writings of this truly great and excellent divine, than any or all the other arguments our Author hath advanced in his whole book. Nor is it easy to see what other end he would have in view, in comparing the doctrines and sentiments of Mr. Edwards, with some things which are to be found in the writings of such as have obtained the name of *fatalists*, in some part of the christian world, than to raise the popular cry against Mr. Edwards, and cast an odium, both upon his sentiments and character. It might have been much more satisfying to the candid, honest inquirers after truth, for our Author fairly to have answered and confuted the arguments, both of Mr. Edwards and those with whom he coincideth in sentiment, in favour of that kind of necessity of events which is urged with so much (at least) *appearance* of reason and argumentation by those learned writers; which, however, hath, among some, obtained the obnoxious and unpopular name of *fate*. It will, probably, upon inquiry, be found that the advocates for *free will*, or they who assert such a liberty of will as implieth a *freedom from all kinds of necessity*, cannot support their opinion by more authorities, or those of greater eminence and weight among both Heathens, Jews, and Christians, than are evidently on the side of *necessity*, and have strenuously supported it. The Author of the *philosophical inquiry concerning human liberty*, supposed to be A. Collins, Esq. says, that liberty (meaning that freedom from all necessity which implies contingency of events) can only be grounded on the absurd principles of *Epicurean Atheists*; and that "The *Epicurean Atheists*, who were the most popular and most numerous sect of atheists of antiquity, were the great assertors of liberty." As authorities for this assertion, he quotes *Lucretius* and *Euf.* and then proceeds to inform us, that the *Stoicks*, "who were the most popular and most numerous sect

“ among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great
“ assertors of——necessity.” His authority for this as-
sertion is Cicero de nat. Deor. L. I. “ The case,”
continues he, “ was also the same among the Jews,
“ as among the Heathen.—They were principally
“ divided into three sects, the Sadducees, the Pharisees,
“ and the Essenes. The Sadducees, who were esteem-
“ ed an irreligious and atheistical sect, maintained the
“ *liberty of man.*” (By *liberty* is here meant that
same *freedom of will* which is termed, both by our
Author and others, a *self-moving, self-determining pow-
er.*) “ But the Pharisees, who were a religious sect,
“ ascribed all things to *fate*, or *God's appointment*,”
(by which this writer meaneth one and the same thing)
“ and it was the first article of their creed, that *fate*
“ and *God* do all ; and consequently they could not
“ assert true liberty, when they asserted a liberty to-
“ gether with this *fatality* and necessity of all things.
“ And the Essenes, who were the most religious sect
“ among the Jews, and fell not under the censure of
“ our Saviour for their hypocrisy, as the Pharisees
“ did, were assertors of absolute fate and necessity.
“ St. Paul, who was a Pharisee and the son of a Phari-
“ see, is supposed by the learned Dodwell to have re-
“ ceived his doctrine of fate, &c. &c. So that liber-
“ ty is both the real foundation of popular atheism,
“ and has been the professed principle of the atheists
“ themselves ; as, on the other side, *fate* or *the necessi-
“ ty* of events, has been esteemed a religious opinion,
“ and been the professed principle of the religious,
“ both among Heathens and Jews, and also of that
“ great convert to christianity, and great converter of
“ others, St. PAUL.” (See p. 54, 55, 56. of his In-
quiry.) The same writer tells us (p. 192.) that
“ The questions of *liberty*, *necessity* and *chance* have
“ been subjects of dispute among philosophers at all
“ times ; and most of these philosophers have clearly
“ asserted necessity, and denied liberty and chance.
“ That “ The questions of *liberty* and *necessity* have
also

“ also been debated among divines, in the several ages
“ of the christian church, under the terms of *free will*
“ and *predestination* : and the divines who have denied
“ *free will*, and asserted *predestination*, have enforced
“ the arguments of the philosopher, by the considera-
“ tion of some doctrines peculiar to the christian reli-
“ gion.” This writer likewise quotes Dr. Clarke, in
what he saith upon the *being* and *attributes* of God, as
evidently espousing the doctrine of necessity (see p.
94.) ; to which the Doctor made a particular reply ;
printed with “ A collection of papers which passed
“ between the late learned Mr. Leibnitz” and the
Doctor.

No weight, however, is, after all, to be laid on
such authorities : there being scarcely any opinion,
however ridiculous or absurd, but what may be sup-
ported by authorities both ancient and modern, as well
christian as heathen.

But as to the reasonableness of founding any argu-
ment, either of the truth or falshood of any opinion
whatever, merely upon its correspondence with *some*
things which have been advanced, either by the
friends, or enemies, of christianity ; I shall only beg
leave to refer the reader to what Mr. Edwards him-
self hath said upon this subject, in Part IV. Sect. 6. of
his Inquiry. If our Author had kept this in view, I
cannot but think he must have felt himself to be en-
gaged in a very fruitless (not to say invidious) em-
ployment, while he was preparing his “ Specimen of
coincidence” for the view of the public.

Beside the injustice done by the Ex—r particular-
ly to Mr. Edwards, many of his observations and rea-
sonings, it to me appeareth, are injurious to the cause
of truth. Some few instances of unjust argumentation,
and of conclusions (I am humbly of opinion, precipi-
tantly drawn) it may not be improper to mention, in
the present section.

Mr. Edwards useth the terms *voluntary*, *free* and
elective, when applied to the internal exercises of men,
in

in nearly one and the same sense ; and in many of his reasonings they are convertible terms. Our Author, that he might evince the terms *free* and *voluntary*, when applied to moral actions, to be of very different import ; and make it appear that, for an action to be *voluntary* is no proof that it is either virtuous or vicious ; endeavoureth to make it manifest that Mr. Edwards's definition of a *moral action*, viz. that it is *voluntary*, includes, not only the actions of men, but also, those of the brute creation. And however dissonant it may be from the dictates of the common sense of men, to imagine that the actions of brutes fall under any moral denomination ; yet, that by the help of metaphysics, we may, in time, bring our minds to comport with such an use of language and terms, see p. 89, 90. If the Ex—r had reflected, that there is, every way, as much evidence that the brute creation correspond with mankind in that quality of their nature, that *their actions are self-determined*, as in this, that they are *voluntary* ; I cannot but think he would have omitted this observation. For him to say, that a power of *self-determination* is what dignifieth man above the brutes, and is that which forms the grand distinction between *moral* and *animal* nature, is altogether without authority and proof. For when he has proved that mankind are invested with such uncommon powers, and that such a power is necessary to the morality of their actions, we shall be equally authorized to say, that *his* definition includeth the actions of the brutal part of the creation, as he now is, to raise such an objection against the definition adopted by us. For he should remember, that, *upon his principles*, there is no more evidence that the actions of brutes are *voluntary*, than that they are *self-determined* : and when he hath given a distinction of human volitions from those of the brute creation, whereby it will appear that the latter cannot be self-determined, though the former are ; *his* metaphysics will, probably, have furnished us with a distinction between the *voluntary* exercises

exercises of mankind, and those of the lower creation ; whereby we shall be able to make it appear, that the former are of a moral denomination, though the latter are not.

Our Author, in opposition, as he seemeth to suppose, to Mr. Edwards, strenuously pleads for *internal* liberty ; by which he evidently meaneth a power of self-determination. (See Part III. Sect. II. and p. 88. 92. 97, 98, 99.) Several arguments which he hath made use of in proof of such a liberty as this in men, it may be proper to examine in these remarks.

1. The Ex—r would gather some proof of that kind of liberty, which he supposeth to be essential to the morality of action, from the consideration of our being placed upon trial, and in a state of probation. (See p. 99.) If he had particularly given the ideas necessarily included under the terms *being upon trial*, it would have been more easily discoverable whether there is any weight in the argument ; but as he hath not, there is no evidence that the conclusion is just. For my own part, I must confess that I know of no other idea conveyed by the expression, than that of *having some future reward, or punishment, suspended upon our present conduct*. What the *disposition* of the creature is respecting the proposed reward, if he be but an intelligent, voluntary agent, doth not, that I am sensible, come at all under consideration, in determining and fixing the idea of being upon trial. After angels and men had sinned, it pleased God to make a proposal of mercy to the latter ; though he passed by the former. This proposal, from the Deity, brought man into a state of trial ; as it again suspended his future felicity, upon his present conduct. Merely the proposal, however, did not in the least abate man's natural enmity against God, and his opposition to him ; or excite any disposition or inclination to a compliance with proposals of such a nature, and made upon such terms. To the fallen angels, no proposals of mercy were ever made ; their state being forever decided,
and

and they fixed in a state of hopeless, remediless ruin, by their original sin and apostacy. Their future state being absolutely and unchangeably decided by what is already passed, and what it is impossible to recall, they are not upon trial; it being infinitely impossible they should ever do any thing in the least degree to alter and change the decisions already made and established, respecting their eternal exclusion from the presence and favour of God. But if it should please God now to enter into a treaty of peace with them, and make proposals of pardon and mercy, upon terms with which nothing would prevent a compliance, but their proud and haughty tempers; this would, at once, put them upon a state of probation and trial; and that, even though there was not the least abatement of their opposition and malice of heart against God. Such a proposal to them would be truly suspending their *future* state upon their *present* conduct; which, as I apprehend, is the principal thing intended and implied in *being upon trial*. And if this is a proper definition of a state of trial, it is easy to see that it doth not imply a power of self-determination. If the idea of a state of trial is nothing more than one being in a state of existence wherein our future happiness, or misery, is suspended upon our present exercises and conduct; then this consideration affordeth not the least argument in support of our Author's hypothesis respecting the powers which are essential to the rewardableness, or punishableness, of actions. Or if it should be insisted that *trial* necessarily includeth the idea of something fitted and adapted to be a proper means of discovering the *self-denial* of creatures, and making manifest the strength of affection there is in them toward God; still this would make nothing in favour of the power in question. If the consideration of our being upon trial affords any pretext for supposing that mankind are invested with the powers in question; it can be only on the supposition that such actions alone as are self-originated, and self-moved, and do not arise from the influence

influence of any extrinsic cause, are, with propriety and equity, either rewardable or punishable.

But if this is the idea our Author designs to convey, by representing it as inconsistent with a *state of trial* to suppose that those actions and exercises, upon which, either a reward, or a punishment, is suspended, should arise from any thing out of the mind as their cause ; he hath made no advances in his argument ; it is barely a repetition of the old objection, under a new form.

It is very evident that nothing can be inferred, in proof of the necessity of the powers in question, in order to the commendableness, or criminality, of actions, merely from the consideration of our *being upon trial*. If actions may be commendable or criminal in beings who are not upon trial, then the *consideration of our being upon trial* determineth nothing, either the one way or the other, respecting the powers which are necessary in order to the praise-worthiness or criminality of actions.*

There are not many, probably, who will expressly deny that the actions and exercises of angels in heaven, and of the devils in hell, are, the one as truly commendable, and the other, criminal ; as any actions or exercises that ever were or will be performed by men in a state of trial. And if actions may be commendable and criminal in beings who are not in a state of trial ; then, of consequence, *our being upon trial*, affordeth no argument of the necessity of our being endowed with the powers in question, *in order to our being justly and equitably rewardable or punishable for our actions*. Merely *being on trial*, rendereth no other power requisite to the commendableness or criminality of actions ; than are necessary to the same purpose, in beings who are *not* upon trial. Being upon trial,

U

therefore,

* Dr. Whitby greatly insisteth, that a power of self-determination is essential to a state of trial ; (see p. 299. 300. 309. 408. &c.) and yet concedeth that the exercises of *angels* are praise-worthy and virtuous ; and of *devils*, vicious and sinful. But seeing that they are necessary, he denieth them to be, the one *rewardable*, the other *punishable*. But if the Doctor had considered that the actions of our Saviour, while upon earth, were in a proper sense *rewardable* ; he would probably have seen the inconclusiveness of his own argument.

therefore, argueth no enlargement of powers, beyond what beings are endowed with, who are not upon trial. And if the actions of those who are so confirmed in a state, either of holiness and happiness, or of sin and misery, as implieth a moral inability and impossibility of change ; are nevertheless, the one commendable, and the other, criminal ; the consequence is obvious that such an inability doth not destroy, or take away, the moral quality of actions ; or hinder but that, this notwithstanding, they may be either virtuous or vicious, and have proper desert of reward or punishment.

2. Another argument advanced by our Author, in proof of such a power of action in man as implieth self-determination, is drawn from the consideration of the use of the means of grace with the unregenerate, and the offer made to those of that character, in the gospel. (See part III. sec. II.) He says, p. 111. that " Means are used with unregenerate sinners : " and on the next page, that " to speak of means, and deny their conduciveness to the end, is an affront to common sense. "—That it would be impeaching supreme wisdom and goodness, to say that they " are not calculated in the best manner to lead sinners unto repentance. " And he asserteth, p. 144. that to say, " the unregenerate have not a moral power to use the means of grace, is the same absurdity as to say, the means have no tendency to the end. " The Ex—r's argument, if I rightly apprehend him, is to this effect, viz. That God treateth with unregenerate sinners as moral agents, capable of being influenced by moral motives—by reason ;—that he offereth pardon and mercy to them upon condition of repentance—that he instructs them sufficiently into the nature of true repentance—and by the strongest and most persuasive reasons and motives, urgeth and presseth the duty upon unregenerate sinners : therefore unregenerate sinners are not under that moral inability which excludeth that liberty and freedom which imply a power of self-determination

termination. This argument of our Author's, I think, by no means concludeth in favour of a power of self-determination. For,

1. That very conduciveness which he supposeth there is, in the means of grace, to bring sinners to repentance; is in direct opposition to the power in question. Means are *outward, external* things, designed and fitted to *bias* and *influence* the mind; and, upon our Author's principles, "calculated in the best manner"—not to unfetter and unshackle the mind from the power and influence of external causes, but to bring it *under their influence*; in order that its choice might be by that influence, directed to *one certain particular* object in distinction from all others. And this, according to our Author, is not only the design and tendency of the means themselves, but also of all those divine aids and assistances vouchsafed to sinners in the use of them. Now that there must be such a variety of *means* used with sinners, in order to bring them to repentance; and these calculated, adjusted and adapted, by *supreme wisdom*, to this very purpose; yea, and more than all this, the aids of *divine grace itself* accompanying them; and, after all, these, many times, proving ineffectual: surely are considerations which are far from arguing any thing in favour of such an internal liberty, as implieth a power of *self-determination*; but rather prove the mind to be under some strong, powerful and prevailing influence *in opposition* to the liberty and power in question.

2. Our Author considereth it as an absurd thing, to say that the means of grace have no tendency to bring men unto repentance. He thinks that the question concerning the tendency of means, with the unregenerate, to the end, is so obvious and plain, that the very proposing of it is enough. (See p. 112.) And he speaks of these means as being, through the divine concurrence with them, *efficacious*. How this consideration can be an argument in favour of a power of *self-determination*, I can by no means comprehend. For what-

ever choice of mind, or act of will, taketh place under the influence of *external causes*, is so far from being *self-determined*, that it is determined by something wholly and entirely out of itself. As far as the means of grace, together with the divine aids which accompany them, have a *tendency* to bring sinners to repentance ; so far they have a tendency to *produce* such an effect in, or upon, the mind of a sinner. And as far as these means, with the divine aids accompanying them, have a tendency in them to produce such effects in the sinner's mind ; so far this effect, in the mind of a sinner, ariseth from the *influence* of these means and the divine aids. But these means and aids being *external* things (I mean extrinsic of the mind itself) as far as the acts and exercises of the mind are under their influence ; so far the acts of the mind are *determined* by something from without ; and, therefore, not *self-determined* ; and so, in our Author's sense, not free.

Not only is this argument impertinent to the Author's purpose ; but it is inconsistent with itself, and with other things frequently allowed in his book.

1. The Ex—r often concedes that mankind are in a fallen and depraved state. He says, (p. 61, 62.) “ Admitting that such a state of the will may be required as is forever *impossible* ; this can be only on “ a supposition of a power once given and possessed, “ but lost.” And (p. 105.) “ However great that “ *impotency* is which is derived from Adam, there is a “ manifest difference between a *moral inability*, or necessity, derived from *the fall* of man, and a like kind “ of inability or necessity, *original* to the human race.” And farther, “ While we acknowledge the *fallen state* “ *of our nature*, and the *impotency* derived from the “ fall, the proper question, on the gospel plan, is, whether salvation is offered to sinners on *practicable* “ terms.” And, p. 108. he speaks of means which are used with sinners as being *sufficient*.

2. Our Author is careful to let his readers know, that though he pleads for a power in the unregenerate

to embrace gospel offers, he doth not mean exclusive of the blessing and grace of God. He saith (p. 105.) "The present question is not, whether fallen man hath "a power, *independently of the aids of grace*, to accept "the gospel proposal." So (p. 114.) "We repeat "it, to prevent mistakes, that when we speak of the "ability of unregenerate men, to use the means of "grace, we mean not *independent power* in themselves : " (this the regenerate have not.)"

To allow any impotency in human nature—any moral inability derived from the fall of Adam—is not consistent with that internal liberty, that power of self-motion, self-determination, which, in our Author's view, is essential to the morality of action. The terms, *impotency*, *moral inability*, &c. when applied to men, if they have any meaning in them, must intend some weakness and imbecility of mind, some unaptness to its proper acts and exercises ; together with some kind of proneness and bias—some preponderating tendency, in the state and circumstances of things, either internal, or external, or both—to that sin and wickedness which must finally issue in our eternal ruin. The terms must certainly denote a weakness, corruption and depravity of mind, which render the sinner's recovery less likely, and more difficult ; and which, likewise, make more and greater means, and more powerful aids of divine grace, necessary to effect the salvation of the sinner, and prevent his final and everlasting destruction. All such kind of *inability* and *impotency*, as far as they prevail, are utterly inconsistent with that internal liberty—that power of self-motion, self-determination—which, in the sense of the Ex—r, is essential to the morality of action.

To assert that salvation is offered to sinners on *practicable* terms (in the sense wherein our Author evidently useth the word) and that such means are used with sinners as are *sufficient* for this purpose, is inconsistent with all ideas of any impotency and inability derived to us by the fall of Adam. For it is asserted (p. 81.)
that

that notwithstanding all Mr. Edwards hath said to the contrary, *natural* and *moral* power are the same. He furthermore tells us (part III. sect. II.) that there are means instituted for the recovery of sinners, which have a *conduciveness* and *tendency* to that end ; and which are *calculated in the best manner*, by SUPREME WISDOM, to lead sinners unto repentance :—that *divine aids* are vouchsafed to render these means effectual ; and that sinners have a *moral power* to use the means of grace.

What sort of an inability and impotency, with respect to doing that duty and complying with those terms, which are the condition upon which eternal life is to be bestowed, *they* can be under, who have *such excellent means* for attaining it ; *divine aids* and *grace* afforded and vouchsafed for making these means *effectual* ; a *moral power* to use these means, in themselves so conducive to the end ; and, finally, nothing required but what is *practicable*—both *morally* and *naturally* so : I say, what sort of inability or impotency mankind can be under, in respect of an end so every way attainable ; and duty so, in every sense, practicable ; is, to me, quite inconceivable.

There is much reason to think that our Author entirely excludeth the ideas of criminality and sinfulness, from that impotency and inability which he supposeth are derived to mankind, from the fall of Adam. For the power, it seems, which the unregenerate have to use the means of grace, is as plenary and extensive as is consistent with a state of dependence on God. To this purpose our Author tells us (p. 114.) and that with much care and caution, lest it should be imagined that he denied the dependence of *unregenerate sinners* on God, “ We repeat it, to prevent mistakes, that “ when we speak of the ability of unregenerate men “ to use the means of grace, we mean not *independent* “ *power* in themselves : this the regenerate have not.” But notwithstanding his care to prevent mistakes respecting the *dependence* of unregenerate sinners on God ;

God ; his readers will, perhaps, not *mistake his real sentiment*, if they should imagine that he supposeth *unregenerate* sinners have as full a power, to all intents and purposes, to do every thing that is really required of them, in their present *weak* state, as the regenerate have ; or, even the Angels of God in heaven. For our Author expressly denieth (p. 116.) “ that *any* “ are commanded, invited, exhorted, &c. to exert “ powers and faculties they are not possessed of—to “ act from principles they are not endowed with.” And saith, that it “ cannot be proposed that the un- “ regenerate should act from the highest spiritual “ principles.” Here our Author hath sufficiently hinted his opinion, that there is no impotency or inability in human nature to any thing which, in our present state, is required of us ; no weakness or inability that is criminal and vicious in the sight of God.

Thus our Author alloweth an *impotency* and *inability* derived from Adam ; and yet insists that nothing can justly be required of mankind, but what they have a *moral*, as well as *natural*, power to perform ; and that they cannot be “ commanded—to act from principles they are not endowed with.” He speaks of means being used with sinners, to bring them to *repentance* ; and yet giveth such a view of their powers and character, and of the requisitions which alone can justly be made upon them, as precludeth all necessity of repentance, and leaveth nothing for which any one can properly be called to repent. For *natural inability* is, on all hands, allowed to preclude blame : and yet, after allowing the *fallen state* of human nature, and the *impotency* of mankind, he insisteth, that “ if the “ incapacity be *real*, it is no matter under what name “ it goes :—that the distinction between *natural* and “ *moral* is nothing to the purpose.” (p. 115.) He admits, “ that such a state of the will may be required as is forever impossible.” (p. 61, 62.) Yet insisteth, that mankind cannot be required “ to act from principles they are not endowed with ;” (see p. 116.) and,

and, on the preceding page, challengeth any one to shew, that, upon any other supposition, the gospel can be a privilege, or men liable to a greater damnation for abusing it.

Our Author urgeth the *conduciveness* of the means of grace to bring sinners to repentance ; and, that the means which God useth with sinners for this purpose, are *sufficient* : yet insists (p. 109.) that the application of invitations and commands is consistent with a *freedom* to either side. And notwithstanding the variety of his pleas, for the *sufficiency* of means, with *fallen, depraved, impotent* creatures ; it is, after all, to be remembered, that whatever action taketh place under the influence, either of any external cause, or internal, preponderating bias of mind, is not, yea, cannot be *free*, with that kind of liberty which is essential to the morality of action :—whatever action is not *self-determined, self-moved*, cannot, with the least shew of reason, be the object, either of disesteem or approbation. He is, likewise, very full in acknowledging the *influence* of divine grace, in making the outward means effectual ; and yet supposeth that such a liberty as excludeth *all influence* from without, is essential to the very idea of desert of praise or blame.

Thus doth it appear that our Author useth the terms *impotency, moral inability, fallen state of our nature, &c.* as mere words of course : it is phraseology which he adopts in compliance with custom, and the prejudices which a narrow education hath, somehow, strangely riveted on the minds of men. However frightful may be the NAMES, *fallen state, moral inability, depravity, &c.* yet our Author meaneth no other than *harmless and innocent THINGS*. Nothing can be more unmeaning and insignificant than such-like phrases as these, when applied to men—to moral characters—on supposition that men can be called *to act on no other principles than such as they have—to exercise no other dispositions than such as they are endowed with* ; and, that the freedom and liberty which we are endowed with

with, by nature, excludeth the concurrence and operation of all extrinsic influence, in the taking place of volition. Our Author especially and particularly denieth the distinction between *natural* and *moral* inability (p. 80, 81.) and hath wrote a book to prove, in opposition to the dark suggestions of men of gloomy apprehensions, that mankind are now endowed with a liberty and freedom with which no such *impotency* and *inability* can consist. And yet, in conformity to the *prevailing prejudices*, he himself hath adopted those *harsh and uncouth epithets*, with which *four, unmannerly bigots* have so often reproached human nature, and branded mankind. It might have been presumed, that a writer who cultivateth such freedom of thought, would not have condescended so far to the weakness and prejudices of men.

It is an objection which hath been often made by Calvinistic divines, against the doctrine of a power of *self-determination* in the will, that such a power in mankind would be inconsistent with the extensive providence of God, and that absolute, unlimited government which he exerciseth over his creatures; as he would hereby become liable to have his "schemes thwarted, and his will resisted," by his creatures. In answer to this objection, our Author quotes Jackson against Collins, (see p. 78. marg.) as saying, that "The superintendency and government of God are of the *moral* kind, like that of a rational monarch over his subjects, who gives them laws, enjoining obedience to them, and establishing them with rewards and punishments." And then says, "*It is the will of God, that we should act freely, and have it in our power to do, or not to do, his commandments.*" It may by some, perhaps, be thought strange, that a Gentleman who exclaims so loudly against the sentiments and principles of Mr. Edwards, as involving in them the opinion that *sin is agreeable to the divine will*, should yet make *such* a reply to the objection under consideration. If it is *agreeable to the will of God, that we*

V

should

should have it in our power to do, or not to do, his commandments, and that we should act freely ; that is, that we should use the power we have to do or not to do his commandments as we please ; it appeareth to me an indubitable consequence, that the schemes of divine government are not thwarted, nor his will in any sense resisted, by his creatures, when they use this power of theirs, either in disobeying, or in obeying, his commandments. If it is God's will that we should have a power to do or not to do, and that we should use this power freely, i. e. indulge the liberty we have to either side ; it is a sure case, that the will of God is never resisted by our exercising and indulging this liberty and freedom, whether it be in choosing obedience or disobedience.

Is there any thing in the sentiments of Mr. Edwards, that upon the whole it was agreeable to the divine mind and will, for wise and excellent ends to be by that means accomplished, that such an event as sin should take place in his system and under his government ? Is there any thing in the doctrines and opinion of Mr. Edwards upon this point, that hath greater appearance of casting reproach upon the moral character of God, or a more direct tendency to lessen our apprehensions of the divine purity, and of the infinite hatred of the Deity to sin, than is here advanced and very fully expressed ?

The truth, doubtless, is, that the schemes and purposes of the moral government of God are not, in fact, thwarted by any thing that ever did, or ever will, take place in the system ; nor his will in this sense resisted. And therefore there is no ground for such an objection as this, arising on any hand from the consideration of the infinite hatred of the Deity to sin, and his most strict prohibition of it. And yet when we consider how much all events in the moral world depend on the volitions of rational, intelligent agents ; it is quite inconceivable that there should be any certainty of the accomplishment of any wise, determinate ends of moral government, if creatures were endowed with the pow-

ers insisted on by our Author as necessary to moral action.

Upon the whole, the doctrine of the consistency of the *moral inability* of mankind, with their obligations to obedience, I am humbly of opinion, standeth upon a firm basis, with whatever ingenuity and appearance of reason our Author hath managed his argument against it ; and that, even by his own frequent concessions and acknowledgment. The expressions which he so frequently useth, of, *the fallen state of our nature, the inability brought upon us by the fall, the impotency derived from the fall, &c.* if they have any meaning, and are not mere words of course and perfectly insignificant, do certainly imply some such *prevailing tendency* in the state of things, either internal or external, to *certain, determinate* actions and exercises of the mind, as is utterly inconsistent with that power of self-motion, self-determination, which excludeth the influence and concurrence of all extrinsic cause. If it is conceded, that the actings and exercises of the minds of men may be of a *moral nature*, consistently with their arising in *some degree* from some preponderating bias and influence, extrinsic of the exercises and determinations themselves ; men will, probably, find no difficulty in their mind, in allowing such an *absolute previous certainty* of all events, as entirely excludeth all ideas of self-origination of volition. Nor can our Author, any farther, consistently, urge the importance and necessity of such a power ; until he is more entirely liberated from the common, prevailing prejudices of mankind, respecting the *depravity* and *impotency* of human nature in its present state.

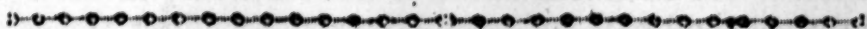
I am therefore humbly of opinion, that, although the Ex—r hath shown that *some* things which Mr. Edwards hath said respecting the *influence of motives upon the minds of men*, are not altogether just and correct ; yet he, himself, hath left the subject not less in the dark than he found it : and therefore, even in this respect, hath no farther served the cause of truth, than to *dis-*

cover some incorrectness in a writer of such character and eminence, as made every of his errors, in some sense, peculiarly dangerous : but even this incorrectness, however real, doth not appear to affect his general argument, or endanger it. But our Author hath done nothing to the purpose, towards answering the arguments made use of by Mr. Edwards, in confutation of the doctrine of a power of self-determination in man ; or, resolving the difficulties with which he hath shown that the opinion itself is most evidently embarrassed. No where hath he shown that the arguments made use of, by that masterly writer, are sophistical and evasive ; or, that he shifteth and changeth, and appeareth backward to face the strongest objections which are made against the opinions and sentiments which he endeavours to vindicate and support. Nothing hath our Author said to invalidate the arguments by which Mr. Edwards proveth an established connexion in things, and an infallible antecedent certainty of all events ; or, to shew their weakness and insufficiency for the support of a doctrine of so much importance : nor yet doth it appear, I am humbly of opinion, that he hath started and urged any objections against the scheme of doctrine advanced by that excellent divine, but such as were sufficiently considered, obviated and refuted, in the very book upon which he is animadverting. I say, *sufficiently* ; because our Author hath no where shown that *his* answers to objections, and solution of difficulties, is not just and decisive. The sum of the Ex—r's objections against an infallible previous certainty of all events which ever take place, in the whole system, as well *moral* as *natural*, is, as I have before observed, that such a doctrine reproacheth the moral character of God, and supposeth him to be the author of sin ; which is inconsistent with all our ideas of him as the just judge and moral governor of the world ; and, therefore, that it is a doctrine necessarily lessening our apprehensions of the purity and holiness of the divine nature, and, indeed, quite abolishing and throwing

ing

ing down all distinction between moral good and evil, virtue and vice.

The consideration of this great and popular objection shall be my next business, and the subject of the ensuing part of this Essay. I will now, therefore, relieve the patience of the reader, after only requesting his candour in his attention to what I may offer on this important subject.



PART

PART II.

Wherein the divine agency and disposal, respecting the taking place of moral evil in the system, are humbly and carefully inquired into, and particularly considered.

THAT the DIVINE BEING should exert any positive agency and influence in such a disposal of things in his system, as he certainly knew would be infallibly attended with the consequence of the taking place of *moral evil*, hath been thought, by many, an opinion too bold and daring to be admitted ; involving in it the most base and unworthy apprehensions of God, and being most reproachful to the wisdom and purity of his laws and government. Accordingly we find, that the great objection which is frequently made against the *calvinistic* scheme of doctrine, viz. that it supposeth God to be the author of sin, hath appeared so formidable, that writers, in general, have evaded a direct answer to it ; and endeavoured to fasten the same upon their adversaries.

And, indeed, that God should be, in any degree, the AUTHOR of sin, in that sense in which the term *author* is very frequently used, is a supposition full of absurdity and blasphemy ; and incapable of being, one moment, admitted. The term *author* very frequently conveys the idea of *doing, performing, or acting*. When we speak of a man as the *author* of any action, or fact, we usually mean the same, as *actor* or *doer* of it. When we speak of any person as being the *author* of a piece of wickedness, we mean the same as *actor* or *perpetrator* of it. When such an idea as this is comprehended under the term *author*, there is something so harsh and grating—something so abhorrent from all our natural notions

notions of God, and of the equity and excellency of his moral government, in the opinion that HE is *the author of sin*—that it may reasonably be expected it will immediately disgust, and appear shocking to the natural reason and common understandings of men.

If the doctrine of an antecedent certainty of all events, and a *fixed, established connexion* of cause and effect, as well in the *moral* as in the *natural* world, in *this sense* maketh God the *author of sin*—if it is a doctrine containing in it so blasphemous a consequence, and reflecting such infinite contempt and reproach upon the moral character of the righteous and glorious Governor of the world—it ought to be rejected with the utmost abhorrence ; and doubtless *will be*, by all such as have any regard for the honour of God. In me, I am sure, it shall not find an advocate, whenever it is made manifest that it carrieth in it such an implication.

BUT the question I would propose to an humble and careful inquiry, is, *Whether God hath not so disposed and arranged things, in his system, by his own positive influence and agency, as, in effect, insured and made certain the existence and taking place of sin ?—Whether he hath not put forth such exertions of his own almighty and resistless power, as he certainly knew would, either mediately or immediately, issue in such an event ?—Yea, whether the infinitely wise and holy God hath not exerted his own divine, omnipotent power, in such a way and manner as he actually DESIGNED and PURPOSED should be followed by the existence and entrance of moral evil into his system ? **

TO

* The whole of this question may be comprehended in the inquiry, *Whether God hath not DECREED, or WILLED, that moral evil shall take place ?* We know not what *agency* there is of the Deity, besides the *exercises of his will* ; nor, what *power* he puts forth, more than *willing*. So that, on the whole, the only inquiry is, *Whether, all things being taken into consideration, it were not the will and purpose of God, that moral evil should exist ?* Though many seem to think it an opinion which reflecteth upon the moral character of God, to imagine any *positive purpose and disposal* in the Deity, in favour of the existence of moral evil ; yet it is an opinion most evidently included in many things plainly held and conceded to, by divines of almost every denomination. Thus Dr. Taylor himself, who frequently objecteth against the *calvinistic* scheme of doctrine, that it maketh God the author of sin ; (see his *Scrip. Doct. edit. II. &c. p. 110. 137. 146. 184. 190. &c.*) yet tells us, that satan's permission to tempt us "*is the appointment of God our Creator, who alone is wise, and who alone hath a right to appoint our trials.*"

To this solemn and important inquiry would I now address myself, with all due humility ; and yet with freedom ; craving the reader's candid and critical attention to what I may offer on the subject.

If it can be made evident that the existence and taking place of sin is the occasion of more and greater good, in the system ; and therefore, that it was, upon the whole, *desirable* in the nature of things, that there should be such an event : and if, farthermore, the supposition of a *positive disposal* of the Deity in favour of the taking place of this event ; and, in such a manner as to *injure* and give *infallible certainty* of its existence ; doth not, at all, reproach the *moral character* of God ; nor is any way inconsistent with his spotless purity and holiness, and his infinite hatred and aversion to all sin :—if such a divine disposal, respecting the taking place of moral evil, is no ways repugnant to his strict prohibitions of sin, and that upon so severe a penalty as the eternal death of the sinner ; nor, in any measure, diminisheth the criminality of it ; or rendereth it unfit and unreasonable that the sinner should be punished for it :—if, I say, it can be made evident that these are matters of undoubted truth, certainty and importance ; the principal difficulties and obstacles in the way of admitting the opinion of a *positive divine agency and disposal* *injuring* the future existence of such an event, and giving *certain futurity* to it, will then

trials." (See p. 156.) And that the *passions* and *appetites* of children should be of the same degree or quality with those of their progenitors (as he alloweth that they may be) he tells us, " can truly be assigned to no other cause besides the *will of God*, who wisely *appoints* to every man his constitution and all his other trials as he thinks fit." (p. 191.) And yet the Doctor alloweth that there is *danger, great danger*, that our sensual appetites and passions shall become irregular and sinful, in a world *so corrupt and full of temptation as ours is*. (p. 186.) And " that we are *very apt*, in a world full of temptation, to be deceived and drawn into sin by bodily appetites." (p. 228.) Now if it is the *will of God* that we should have such constitutions as we have, and appetites and passions so exposing us to sin ; and if he hath put us into a world under such circumstances as that we shall be *exceeding apt* to sin, and hath *appointed* that we should be subject to the temptations of the devil :—if God hath *appointed* all these circumstances, which are universally followed by men's actually committing sins and it was *his will* that these occasions, circumstances and causes should all actually exist ; all this will surely amount to very little short of a *positive divine disposal* in favour of the existence and taking place of moral evil.

then be removed : and the great and popular objection against some of the important doctrines of revelation—viz. That they appear to make God the author of sin—will be removed ; and the objection itself will appear less formidable than hath, often, been apprehended.

If these things can be made evident, and are clearly consistent with reason and the common sense and apprehensions of men ; it will surely be manifest, that this great and popular objection is an argument capable of being used to much better purpose, and greater advantage, in addresses to the *imagination*, than the understanding of men.

If, moreover, a divine agency and positive disposal, giving *certainly* to the existence of moral evil, shall appear to be the dictate of the common sense and reason of men ; and, also, a doctrine fully asserted, and clearly taught and held up to view, in the word of God ; this, it is presumed, will be sufficient to silence the cavils of men ; and *these* are considerations of sufficient weight to prevent *their* being made an objection against any doctrine whatsoever.

These are subjects which I would propose to a humble and careful inquiry, in the following sections. I have only to ask a patient and fair hearing ; and that no one would condemn me, without giving the reasons I offer in support of my opinion, a careful consideration, and allowing them their just weight.

S E C T. I.

Wherein it is inquired, Whether the existence and taking place of sin are not the occasion of MORE AND GREATER GOOD, in the system, than could otherwise have been effected and produced ?

THAT *sin* should be, in such a sense and to such a degree, the occasion of *greater good* in the universe, as to render it upon the whole *desirable* that it
W
should

should ever actually come into existence, is an opinion which the Author of the Examination of Mr. Edwards, &c. thinks is very extravagant, and that it containeth in it, consequences which are very shocking and absurd. He supposeth that, upon admitting such an hypothesis, it will follow, "That the law of man's nature, at first, was imperfect—that the revolt of men and angels, was in compliance with the end of their being, and the wise and gracious intention of the Creator." (See p. 74.) That sin is *in fact* followed with greater good, our Author considereth as matter of "mere conjecture, at best—without any solid foundation. For (saith he) unless we can tell what would have been, had sin never entered the world, it is impossible we should be able to judge, by way of comparison, of the greater good consequent upon it; or be able to say that it is best upon the whole." (p. 75.) It is acknowledged that where the objects, between which a comparison is to be formed, are not both in view, we cannot judge of them by way of comparison. But as to the two events, viz. the taking place of moral evil in the universe, and its opposite; a little consideration may, perhaps, be sufficient to convince us that they are objects *by one means or another* so far brought within the compass of our view, as to enable us to form a comparative judgment between them.

And that we may be enabled to form a judgment in the present case, and conclude with some degree of certainty that sin is the *occasion* of more and greater good, in the system, than would or could have been, if moral evil had not taken place; I would propose the following arguments to consideration—after premising,

1. That the existence and taking place of *moral evil*, and *the universal reign of holiness*, in the system, are events *directly the reverse* of each other. There are no two objects, wherein are to be found a greater diversity, or a more direct and full opposition to each other,

other, than in *holiness* and *sin*. There is no degree of communion, harmony or agreement between them ; nor any quality which they possess in common with each other. There is ever the most perfect discord and variance between *virtue* and *vice*. There is not the least degree of concurrence of *tendency* and *influence*, in holiness and sin. No two things can be more opposite and perfectly repugnant to each other.

2. That these two events must necessarily be attended with a great and remarkable diversity of *effects* ; and that, through the whole intelligent system—the creation of God. The whole moral *created* system, in all and every part of it, feels the change introduced by the taking place of sin. There is not one intelligent, moral being, within the whole circle of created nature, but feels, and forever will feel, his circumstances and condition, in some respects or other, to be greatly altered and widely different from what they would have been, if moral evil had never made its appearance in the system. And this change, moreover, is such as will affect every creature, not only for some considerable time and space, but will reach and extend its effects to endless ages—to eternity. The introduction of *moral evil* will diversify the circumstances of every individual in the whole system of created intelligences, forever and ever.

This diversity of effect in the moral, created system, will be *infinite* ; things never reverting into the former channel, and recurring to the same circumstances as if sin had never taken place ; nor even *approaching* thereto : the variety of circumstances and condition, on the other hand, continually augmenting and increasing to eternity.

The scheme and method of divine administration and government are infinitely diversified by the introduction of moral evil—the taking place of sin : and by this means such a scene is opened in the moral world, as tendeth exceedingly to raise and exalt our ideas of the power, wisdom and goodness of Him who sits at

the head of the system, and whose powerful arm alone holds and manageth the helm. The methods of government, in the kingdom of God, are, in general, new; and exceedingly diverse from what they would have been, had sin never taken place.

This opposition of tendency to each other, in *holiness* and *sin*; and this infinite diversity in the state and circumstances of all moral, created beings, and in the whole scheme and plan of the moral government of God; I take to be matters of undoubted certainty—indisputable truth.

These considerations, I am humbly of opinion, may lay a foundation for determining, with some degree of certainty, the expediency and propriety of such a disposition of things, such a method and plan of operation, as should be introductory of *moral evil*, and certainly followed by the taking place of sin: and, enable us to form a comparative judgment, with a great degree of precision, between the degrees of GOOD which should arise and actually be accomplished in the system, under these severally different and exceedingly diverse schemes and methods of government and administration.

And that the scheme of government and plan of operation under which *moral evil* should certainly take place, tend to the greater, yea, far greater, GOOD of the moral world; and that some very desirable, valuable and excellent end is to be herein answered, which could not so well have been accomplished in any other way; may appear from the following consideration.

I. It is altogether inconceivable, that the scenes of such infinite diversity of operation and effect, should be *equally beautiful, equally conducive to the general and greatest good*. That plans and scenes of operation so exceedingly the reverse of each other; and, of events of such infinite diversity, such perfect and full opposition of tendency to each other; both, too, attended with consequences infinitely extensive and great; should yet be so exactly and perfectly balanced, and
equally

equally productive of good, as to leave no room for infinite, all-penetrating wisdom to distinguish between them, nor ground upon which a preference might be formed; is a supposition so very extravagant, that no serious, thinking person can possibly admit and entertain it.

If wisdom gave the preference to a plan of government and scene of operation, wherein *sin* should never take place—*moral evil* never come into existence—the wickedness which taketh place under the divine administration of government is not *only* in its *nature* and *tendency* reproachful to God, but such an actual stain and blemish in his character and government, as it is impossible ever to wipe off or conceal. The supposition of such a preference of wisdom as this, most evidently chargeth the Deity with a defect, either in wisdom, goodness, or power. In *wisdom*—that he did not foresee and devise what would be most for the general good; or in *goodness*, that he did not actually choose and prefer it; or in *power*, that he did not accomplish his own *wise* and *benevolent* designs.*

To suppose that ends and purposes, *equally* wise and excellent, should be brought about and accomplished, under methods of government and administration so exceedingly and infinitely the reverse of each other, is putting such an *alternative* upon the Deity, as taketh away all possible room and ground for *any voluntary determination* at all, in the case; and is a supposition which maketh it abundantly to appear, that the coming into existence of the present system, such as it actually is, in *distinction* from any other, was not the fruit of *wisdom*—of *wise design and determination*. So that the Psalmist, when speaking, in Ps. civ. 24. of the manifold works of God, was under a gross mistake in saying,

* "God is an *omnipotent* good, and it is his peculiar glory to bring *good* out of *evil*, that by the opposition and lustre of *contraries* his goodness might be *the more conspicuous*.—'Tis an impious folly to imagine that God was either defective in *wisdom*, not to know what was the best state for man in his creation; or defective in *goodness*, that, knowing it, he would not confer it upon him; or defective in *power*, that, willing, he was unable to make him better." (See Dr. Bates on the harmony of the divine attributes, third edition, p. 47.)

ing, "in *wisdom* hast thou made them all," or ever apprehending it ; but he ascribed *that* to God, which doth not, in fact, appear in his works.

Besides :—To suppose that the GOOD to arise from this diversity of effect and operation in the moral world, was so exactly and equally balanced and proportioned, in these severally different plans of administration, as to exclude all room for a *preference* of the one before the other, implieth that it was not an *undesirable* thing, upon the whole, that moral evil should take place and come into existence. It implieth, likewise, that the *infinitely wise and good Being* did not, himself, *prefer* a method and scene of operation and government, which should entirely exclude any such event.

When the universal and uninterrupted reign of holiness, in all ages, and all orders and ranks of beings, *on the one hand* ; and the existence of moral evil, and its amazingly extensive reign, *on the other* ; were events (to speak after the manner of men) in contemplation in the divine mind (as it must be, on all hands, admitted that God had a perfect knowledge, foresight and view of all possible existences and events)—if that system and scene of operation, in which moral evil should never have existence, was actually *chosen* and *preferred* in the divine mind ; certainly the Deity is infinitely disappointed in the issue of his own operations—if, indeed, they may be called *his own* : and it must needs be that HIS will is infinitely more crossed and thwarted by that scene and course of events which are actually exhibited to view, than that of *any*, or *all*, other beings together, in this extended, complicated system.

II. From the preceding observations it is abundantly manifest, that the plan of government, and scene of operation and events, which is *actually furnished out to view* in the present system, was the fruit of CHOICE—of PRUDENT, WISE DESIGN. Nothing can be more dishonorable and reproachful to God, than to imagine
that

that the system which is actually formed by the divine hand, and which was made for his pleasure and glory, is, yet, not the fruit of wise contrivance and design. And it must be equally inconsistent with all our ideas of the *natural* as well as *moral* perfections of God, to apprehend that he had not in his view, antecedent to creation, the *possibility* of a system of intelligences, among whom there should be no defection from God. Our Author himself speaketh in terms naturally tending to excite, in his readers, an apprehension that he imagined such a system a *conceivable* thing. He says (p. 75.) "To say it (*sin*) could not have been prevented, is saying more than any one knows." And yet he saith, "How sin came to be permitted, is more than any one can comprehend." The very supposition, however, of a possibility of a system of intelligences perfectly holy, and free from all degrees of sin; doth very naturally suggest to us one general reason for the existence of such a system as that in which we now are, viz. that some *more wise and excellent ends* are to be accomplished under the present system of government and administration, than could have been brought about in a system and under a government wherein no such thing as moral evil took place. If we admit the possibility that sin could have been prevented in the moral world; how can we otherwise reconcile it to the divine character and government, that such an event hath been, in fact, permitted to take place—yea, and that moral evil hath been suffered to spread over so great a part of the system—otherwise than by supposing that it will be the occasion of *greater good* in the universe, than could otherwise have been accomplished?

When we consider the infinite extent of the wisdom, goodness and power of God, and take into view his absolute supremacy, government and authority; it must be a very *peculiar stretch* of imagination and thought, that can suppose the present system of events and administration is not, in all its parts, the fruit of
choice,

choice, and wise design ; and that, in preference to all other systems possible or conceivable :—And this it certainly could not be, unless some more wise and valuable ends were to be accomplished, than could have been brought to pass in a system wherein there was no moral evil. However great and infinite may be the conceivable variety of systems, which the divine, omnipotent mind may be supposed to have in view ; yet they may be all comprehended under this one general distinction, of being with, or without sin. And between systems, in this general view only, is the comparative judgment to be formed, and the preference to be given of the one, before the other. What the judgment and preference of the divine mind in fact were, is sufficiently evident in event :—an authority upon which we may safely conclude the preferableness of such a system before any other ; and, that some more valuable ends will be accomplished in the present system, than could have been under any other.

These considerations, it may possibly be thought, are sufficient to enable us to judge, *by way of comparison*, of the greater good consequent upon the taking place of sin.

However, before we proceed to the consideration of the other arguments from whence it appeareth that the existence of *moral evil* is the occasion of greater good than could otherwise have taken place, it may be proper to make some general observations respecting the GREATEST GOOD, to shew what it is, and wherein it doth consist.

And, in general (as far as it relateth to the present question) *the greatest and most extensive exercise, and the most full and complete manifestation of the divine perfections, is the GREATEST GOOD.*

The greatest good of the universe must necessarily be, either the *real, inherent, necessary perfections of JEHOVAH* ; or, *their exercise and manifestation in their proper and genuine fruits.* Or, in other words, the GLORY OF GOD, IN GENERAL, is the greatest good.

good. The *essential* glory of God consisteth in his *perfect and infinite sufficiency for great and excellent things*. It is unquestionably desirable, in the very nature of things, that this *sufficiency of the Deity for great and excellent things*, should be *manifested* and appear in its proper and genuine fruits and effects. For why is such a sufficiency for great and excellent things *desirable*, but that it may actually effect, produce and accomplish them?

This *appearance or manifestation* of this infinite sufficiency of the Deity for great and excellent things, in its proper and genuine fruits and effects; is what constituteth his *declarative* glory: for in this *appearance, exercise, or manifestation*, it essentially consisteth. *Where, therefore*, there is the largest and most extensive *exercise* of the divine perfections, and the fullest *appearance and display* of the infinite sufficiency there is in God for great and excellent things, in its genuine and natural fruits and effects; *there is*, without question, the GREATEST GOOD.

These considerations would naturally lead us to conclude, that the infinitely wise and good God, when entering upon the work of creation, would infallibly choose such a system as would open a field for the largest display and most extensive exercise of his own inherent, infinite excellency and perfection. If the true beauty and glory of the infinite sufficiency there is in God for great and excellent things, consisteth in its being *exercised and put forth into act*, and *appearing in its genuine expressions and natural fruits*; reason would, then, teach us that the *wisdom* of the Deity, when he was entering upon the formation of a system, for the very purpose of exercising and displaying his infinite perfection, would necessarily direct to the choice of such an one as would spread the most extensive scene of operation, and afford the largest field for the display of the inexhaustible treasures of his perfection. *

X

It

* The divine moral perfection summarily consists in *goodness*. The brightest display, therefore, of the moral perfection of God, is the same as the greatest manifestation and highest exercise of *true goodness*. The tendency of *goodness*, in its

It may, also, be proper here to observe a few things respecting the *manner of effecting the greatest good, and the way wherein only it can be accomplished.*

It hath been observed, that the *greatest good*, as far as it relateth to the present argument, is nothing different from the fullest manifestation, and largest and most extensive exercise and display, of the divine perfections, in their genuine, proper and natural fruits. And it must necessarily be so: for if the inherent, necessary perfections of the Deity, are really *most excellent and infinitely great*; it very clearly followeth, that the most full, complete and extensive *exercise* of these perfections, and the most sensible, discernible manifestation of them in their genuine expressions and fruits, is the greatest good which can be produced by creation, and appear in, and be accomplished by it.

These things being considered, it may perhaps appear, that the existence of *moral evil* is a *necessary means* of the greatest good; yea, if the most full and extensive *exercise* and *manifestation* of the inherent perfections of the divine nature, in their genuine effects and fruits, is, either *itself* the greatest good, or necessarily involves and contains it; it most certainly followeth, that *moral evil* was a *necessary means* of the greatest good. Many are apt to consider it as an instance of the greatest arrogance, to suppose that God *could not* have accomplished all the wise and excellent ends which actually appear and take place in the present system as it is, if moral evil had never taken place—That it doth not appear but that he might as fully have manifested himself, in his own infinite sufficiency and perfection, to the views and understanding of his creatures; and, therefore, have accomplished all the same excellent ends, if he had so seen meet, without this most melancholy of all events. They who talk or think in this strain, ought to remember,

1. That in those works of his, wherein he is pur-

posing

its exercises, is to *do and produce good*. Where there are the highest exercises of divine goodness, there the greatest good is done. The highest exercises of the divine goodness, necessarily suppose the highest good to be effected.

posing to display his moral character, and make a real manifestation of himself to the understanding and views of his intelligent creatures ; it is worthy of his wisdom, befitting his infinitely glorious character, to adapt himself to his creatures, and accommodate himself to their capacities, understanding and powers, in those of his works wherein are particularly designed to be exhibited the excellencies and beauties of his infinitely sublime and amiable character. However full and infinitely strong the *real exercise* of that most glorious and infinitely amiable and beautiful disposition of the divine mind which constitutes his moral character may be in itself ; yet, if the exercise is not in such a way and manner, and so sensible, as to be discernible and perceptible by his creatures ; the end of creation, and of its exercise, is not answered ; and, agreeable to what hath been before said, the *greatest good* not effected and produced.

2. The same wisdom which will direct that the Deity should accommodate himself to his creatures, in the exhibitions he is making of his perfections, in his works, will, likewise, for the same reasons, direct that he should accommodate himself in his operations, and adapt himself *in the best conceivable manner*, to their understandings, capacities and powers. That if *one particular plan—one definite method of operation*—shall serve to make the divine character more susceptible and discernible by his creatures, and more fully and abundantly exhibit *to their view the very disposition* which is inherently in him ; then this must be the plan—this the method of operation, which will infallibly be chosen by infinite wisdom.

3. The Deity can be known by his creatures *only in his works* ; and his character seen and understood *only in events which are immediately discernible and perceptible by us*. It is incompatible with the idea of creature, to know God by *direct, immediate* perception, or in the same way wherein we know ourselves, and are immediately perceptive and conscious of our own thoughts

and exercises. This would be such a kind of union of the creature to the Deity, as implieth sameness of consciousness, and absolute divinity. This would be that same nearness and union, which subsist between the THREE PERSONS of the ever blessed and adorable TRINITY.

To say, therefore, that God *cannot make known* his perfections, otherwise than by causing them to *appear in fruits*, is not setting bounds to the *power or wisdom* of God, but to the powers and capacities of *creatures*. It is, in effect, only saying, that God *cannot make* his perfections *appear*, without causing them *actually to appear*. And it is so far from implying any limitation of the perfections of the Holy One of Israel, that it only implieth a limitation of the powers and capacities of *created beings*—*imperfection* necessarily cleaving to them.

Such considerations as these would naturally lead us to conclude that GOD, in his infinite wisdom, first formed the system with a *particular, express view* to the most clear and full discovery and manifestation of his own infinite perfections—the inherent and infinitely excellent disposition of his divine nature—*especially* in his kingdom of redemption—That *all things* were most perfectly adjusted, in infinite wisdom; and *every event, of whatever nature or kind*, which was ever to become extant in any part of the system, most exactly bounded, limited and circumscribed, by the fore-knowledge and determinate counsel of God.

These observations make way for pursuing, to better advantage, the general argument under consideration; and making it more clearly and manifestly appear, that the existence of *moral evil* in the system is the occasion of *far greater good* than ever could have been accomplished if there never had been sin.

The following excellent ends have unquestionably been answered by the existence of *moral evil*, or the taking place of sin.

I. The existence of moral evil hath undoubtedly occasioned

occasioned a more perfect, full and glorious discovery of the infinite aversion and irreconcilable hatred of the holy and pure nature of God, to all sin, than could any otherwise possibly have been made to the views of creatures. How exceedingly great and infinitely strong the opposition of the divine mind is to all sin, and his utter abhorrence of all moral evil, and aversion to it; are more clearly and perfectly *delineated and expressed*, in the just punishment of it, than it is possible or conceivable that it should be, in any other way. The aversion and hatred of the divine mind to moral evil, are *expressed* only in the *appearance* of its opposition to it. And the fullest and strongest *appearance* there can be, to the views of creatures, of the opposition of the divine nature to sin, is in the punishment of the sinner. There is no other way for the infinite aversion of the divine mind to sin to appear in *fruits and in effects*, than in its punishment. And as this infinite purity and holiness—this most perfect and irreconcilable hatred of the divine mind to moral evil, are the peculiar glory of God; so all the appearances and manifestations of this disposition, in whatever God doth, are lovely and excellent: it being, in the nature of things, most desirable that there should be made the most full and clear discovery and manifestation that can be, of this disposition of the divine mind, to the views of intelligent creatures who are capable of beholding and admiring it.

That things, therefore, in the system of God, should be so ordered, arranged and disposed, as to make way and afford an opportunity for those wonderfully glorious and full discoveries of this infinitely excellent and amiable disposition of the pure and holy nature of God, in the eternal punishment of fallen angels, and of impenitent sinners among men; and, above all, in the sufferings of the Son of God; is certainly a fruit of infinite wisdom and infinite goodness. For never could the appearances of this disposition of the divine mind, have been so clear and strong to the views and
comprehension

comprehension of creatures, if moral evil had not taken place ; nor any thing which carried in it proper desert of the contempt, displeasure and anger of the *infinite Being*, appeared in any of the numberless race of the creatures of God.

II. As the existence of *moral evil* hath occasioned an abundantly more clear and glorious discovery of the infinite purity of the divine nature, and the exceeding strength of his aversion to sin ; so, also, hath it, in like manner, laid a foundation for God's *establishing* his supremacy, authority and government over his creatures, upon a more sure and firm basis than there would have been advantage and opportunity for, had no such thing ever appeared in event. Now all creatures do or will see, in a more clear, lively and affecting manner than could otherwise have possibly been discovered to them, what a " fearful thing it is to fall into the hand of the living God," and the infinite hazard they run in presuming to rebel against him. Nothing so *establisheth* the authority of JEHOVAH, in the minds of his creatures, and giveth such clear and awful views and exalted ideas of his majesty and supremacy, as the amazing torments and just sufferings of the enemies of God continually before their eyes. In the clear and full views of the torments of the damned in hell, it doubtless is, that the elect Angels and Saints in heaven are supported and secured in obedience, and in perpetual allegiance to him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. By this means, and in this glorious act of justice on his final enemies, God hath forever established his authority through his wide, extended government and dominion ; by this means eternally securing the perfect obedience of all creatures of every rank and order : So that peace and undisturbed harmony shall forever reign among all who have not yet rebelled against God.*

III. The

* When I speak of various ranks and orders of creatures who are secured in obedience, and over whom the divine authority is established, by means of the punishment of the damned in hell ; I do not mean that any reference should be had

III. The *infinite goodness and love of God* appear in a far more strong and glorious light to the views of creatures, than they ever could, if moral evil had not taken place. Though this event hath, in no degree, augmented the goodness and love of God; yet it hath administered occasion of a more full and glorious discovery of the inherent goodness of the divine nature, *to the views and apprehensions of creatures*, than there would have been any advantage and opportunity for, if there had never been any such event.

The event and consequence of the existence of moral evil, *in fact* are the most surprising discoveries of the infinite goodness and grace of God. And whatever is the end in which the work of creation issueth, *in event*, we may with much safety conclude, was an end which God himself had ultimately in view, in *producing* creation. And we may, with equal safety, conclude, that with a special view to *this end* it was that God formed the world, and arranged things in that particular order which we behold.

There are several ways wherein the *infinite goodness, and love, and marvellous grace* of God now appear in an abundantly more clear, strong and glorious light, *to the views of creatures*, than there could be any advantage or opportunity for them to discover, had moral evil never taken place. Particularly,

I. In

had to any supposed ranks of intelligent creatures inhabiting the several bodies which compose this system and surround our world. If any such there are, they will doubtless receive some signal benefit and advantage from that glorious exercise of the divine authority which appeareth in the eternal torments of the damned in hell. On the contrary; the supposition itself, that the planetary worlds are inhabited by intelligent beings, notwithstanding all the ingenious conjectures of men, appears to me, *at least* extremely uncertain, and without any solid reason for its support. The general argument of God's having made nothing in vain, in favour of this supposition, I am humbly of opinion, is far from being sufficient for the support of so important an hypothesis. Far should we be from having any reason to consider them as being made in vain, according to my apprehension of things, if we should admit that they are utterly destitute of any intelligent inhabitant. For, on the other hand, it is evidently worthy of God that he should, as it were, take state upon himself, in his appearance upon a theatre where such great and marvellous designs are carrying on, as are transacting in this our world. And when the principal character in the grand drama, is no less than that of *THE SON OF GOD*, it seemeth fit and suitable to his dignity, that the scene should be hung with symbols and ensigns of majesty; fitted to awaken the respectful awe, and engage the solemn attention, of the spectators and subjects of so sublime and noble an action.

1. In his opposing *that* which opposeth the general good. The divine love is as conspicuous in its opposition to every thing which is detrimental to the general good, as in the positive favours and blessings diffused under God's excellent and glorious government: as the affection of a just and generous Prince, and his concern to promote the peace and tranquillity of his subjects, are as evident and pleasing in his care to resist and repel their enemies, as in his concern to diffuse the positive blessings of peace; and, as conspicuous in his steady and unshaken resolution to punish offenders against the laws and peace of the community, as in protecting his loyal and obedient subjects in the quiet possession of their properties and rights.

So the love of an affectionate and faithful *husband*, though otherwise it had never been questioned, appeareth in far more winning and pleasing light upon occasion being afforded of his shewing his just, manly and generous resentment of any abusive treatment of his *wife*. And *she* herein becometh sensible of a *strength and fervor of love*—a *closeness of union of heart* to her, of which she never before could have any clear ideas and just conceptions. And this discovery cannot but be exceedingly pleasing and ravishing to the wife. So the infinite extent of the divine love, and the amazing strength of the union of heart, of the glorious Sum of all being, to the general and greatest good; appear in a more admirably strong and amiable light in the infinite strength of his opposition to sin and wickedness, and to such as obstinately oppose the good of the system, than they possibly could have done *to the views of creatures*, if moral evil had never taken place.

2. The divine goodness and love appear *particularly free, generous and conspicuous*, from the consideration of the exceeding unworthiness and vileness, and the utter ill-desert, of such as are made the subjects of *divine grace*. The testimonies of divine goodness might, undoubtedly, have been exceedingly strong as well as innumerable, if no sin had ever disturbed the peace,
and

and interrupted the harmony, of the moral, created world. But never could it have been so abundantly manifest *to the views of creatures*, that the blessings, the natural good, diffused through the universe, had their *source entirely in the free, diffusive nature—the infinite benevolence and munificence, of the divine mind and disposition*. The more unworthy the object, the more doth *all good* appear to proceed from the very nature of him who bestoweth it ; and, to take its rise purely in the temper and disposition which are inherent in him. As the case now in fact is, in bestowing mercy and favour upon sinners, the divine Being appeared to be self-moved, i. e. to act from the inherent goodness of his own infinitely pure and benevolent nature ; to be merciful, because it is his nature to be merciful. As the characters of mankind really are, it abundantly appeareth, that God sheweth mercy and doeth good *for his own sake*—because it is his pleasure, his delight, and the highest gratification of his own infinitely amiable, pure and holy nature ; and because it is *that* wherein his own infinite felicity and enjoyment consist. Hence *divine love* is spoken of, in scripture, with this mark of distinction—that it is exercised toward *the wicked, the ill-deserving*. And the Deity, when he purposeth a manifestation of love *which shall shew itself to be divine*, in distinction from any thing which ever appeared here in our fallen world, in the characters most esteemed and revered among men ; singlet out the *ungodly* for the subjects of it : herein commending his love towards us, that *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. Rom. v. 8.

3. The love of a friend is manifested by the hazards to which he will expose himself, and the dangers and sufferings to which he will submit, for us. The strength of love appeareth, in that which it will do for us. Adversity trieth the strength of friendship, by administering peculiar opportunities for its exercise and assistance. Hence the vulgar proverb, *A friend in need, is a friend indeed*. The same sentiment

is thus expressed by the wise man, Prov. xvii. 17. "A friend loveth *at all times*, and a brother is born for *adversity*." Nothing so endeareth any one to us, as his cordial friendship, and the tokens of a stedfast, unalterable affection and love, when we are forsaken, destitute, and in distress: nothing discovereth such strength and fervor of affection, such close and intimate union of heart to us. Thus the tender and soothing friendship, the kind assistance and generous confidence, of an affectionate husband, for a poor, weak, helpless woman, who is forsaken and abandoned of every other helper and friend, will be the most comforting cordial, and the strongest testimony of connubial love; deserving the most generous and grateful returns. And for a husband, beholding a helpless yet ungrateful wife in some imminent danger, and incapable of being assisted and relieved otherwise than at the hazard of his own safety and life; yet in these circumstances to forget all her ingratitude and infidelity, and boldly, though calmly, plunge himself into the most imminent danger for her safety and relief, and actually rescue and save her—how peculiarly tender and affecting would be her feelings—how soft and pleasing her sensations, if she had any gratitude, ingenuity and love! To find in a husband to whom she had been unfaithful, yet so tender, so endearing and faithful a friend; in whose love she may confide, and to whose bosom she is invited to return: to find, I say, in such an one, an unalterable affection, and such strength of love as will brave and despise dangers for her safety; must certainly give so convincing a proof, so strong a testimony, of unconquerable, invincible love, as cannot fail exceedingly to delight and ravish the heart, where there are the least remains of gratitude and love.

Under what figure or emblem is the divine love, towards his chosen ones, so often represented in the word of God, as this? The holy Spirit himself could find no other similitude so aptly to express *to our understanding*

derstanding and comprehension the wonderful strength, extent and freedom of the divine love. Christ Jesus himself is frequently represented as a bridegroom ; and the church, his spouse. When He beheld us in our infinitely ruined and guilty state, pursued by the wrath and vengeance of Almighty God ; notwithstanding our base ingratitude, abominable prostitution and infidelity, he not only calmly ventures into the midst of danger, but even submits to death itself, and sustaineth the infinite weight of the divine wrath, for us ; himself becoming a curse, and bearing our sins in his own body upon the tree, for us.* And now, having purchased redemption for his people, he, with infinite condescension and indulgence, inviteth us to put our trust in him, and freely to cast all our cares and burdens upon him—pouring our complaints into his bosom, with the fullest assurance of finding in him an infinitely powerful protector, and cordial, faithful and indulgent friend.

Nor is it the church, which is *redeemed from among men*, that alone receiveth the benefit of the great things done for sinners : but the whole family in heaven have herein stronger testimonies, and more lively, affecting and engaging discoveries, of the infinite depth, perfection and purity of the DIVINE LOVE, than they would otherwise have been capable of receiving : which discoveries, doubtless, wonderfully open and enlarge their friendly and benevolent hearts, and exceedingly increase their felicity and joy in God. That this is verily the case, is evidently held forth in the parable of our blessed Lord concerning the lost sheep, Matt. xviii. 12. where it is represented as a peculiar ornament and testimony of the divine love,

Y 2

that

* We are not to suppose that the *sufferings* of Christ were, strictly speaking, infinite : though very extreme, they were nevertheless *finite*. The wrath which exists in the divine mind against sinners, is really without bounds, and truly infinite. This displeasure of God with sinners, Christ endured in its natural and genuine effects : and *that* to such a degree, and in such measure, as, considering the infinite dignity of his person, were as really sufficient to establish the divine authority, and manifest God's infinite hatred of iniquity, as though this displeasure had fallen on the sinner, and sunk him into endless perdition.

that "the Son of man came to save that which was lost." The concern of the good shepherd for *one lost sheep*, is a testimony of his affection and regard for the flock ; as it sheweth what pains he will take to recover *even one*. So the divine Being, agreeable to this similitude, manifesteth, in the salvation of sinners, not merely his love *to us* ; but the infinite benevolence and goodness of his holy and pure nature in general, to the abundant joy and greater felicity of every virtuous being in the whole intelligent system.

IV. Another valuable end, occasioned by the existence of moral evil, is the peculiar preparation to which it formeth such imperfect creatures as men, for rejoicing in God, and beholding and enjoying the infinite beauty, riches and glory of his free and abundant grace. Nothing, like distress and a sense of danger, prepareth the heart for relishing assistance and relief. Nothing, like a sense of guilt, ingratitude and unworthiness, formeth and fitteth the heart for rejoicing in *grace*. Such is the imperfection of human, and indeed of all created, nature, that things, to our view, are greatly illustrated by their opposites ; and every character and quality appear heightened by contrast. Thus hunger prepareth for relishing food ; and sickness, for enjoying health. So weariness prepares for rest, and sweetens it to us ; and darkness, for making the light welcome and acceptable to us. Hence the *morning light* is a known emblem of joy ; and the period of our sorrows is often compared to the *fleeing of the shadows of the night*. Relief is never so acceptable and grateful, as when our distresses are at their height ; and never is any so ready to acknowledge, and so prepared to behold, the glory of free, sovereign grace, as when he hath the deepest sense of his own infinite vileness and unworthiness, and most sensibly feebleth his helplessness and dependence. Hence it is one of the characters of divine *grace*, which *particularly* commendeth it, that its assistance and relief are so opportune—so peculiarly seasonable and timely. Accordingly

cordingly we find it said, Isai. xlix. 8. "Thus saith the Lord, in an *acceptable* time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee:" that is, when relief and assistance were most needful. Agreeably Christ is represented as being anointed "to preach good tidings—to proclaim the *acceptable* year of the Lord—and *comfort all that mourn.*" Isai. lxi. 1, 2. Therefore it is that the evangelical Prophet, foreseeing by faith the coming of "that just one," exclaimeth in those tender and animating strains, Isai. lii. 7. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, **THY GOD REIGNETH.**"

Here are some few of those valuable ends which appear to have been occasioned by the existence of moral evil, in the system.

Now, that the taking place of sin hath opened a wider and more extensive field of operation, and spread a scene for a more full display and manifestation, and strong and clear discovery, of the divine perfections, is a fact, of which, I think, there cannot possibly be any doubt. The eternal destruction of sinners, it cannot possibly be conceived, will be any *hindrance or obstruction* to those manifestations of the divine fulness, sufficiency and goodness, which he will make towards the chosen vessels of his mercy and grace. There is not the least reason to imagine that the existence of moral evil will be the occasion of *preventing* the discovery of any thing *which is really in the Deity*, to his elect—the virtuous part of the system of created intelligences. Nor can it be supposed that there will be any thing, *occasioned by the taking place of sin*, in any degree to obstruct the saints' vision of the divine perfection, and their apprehension and understanding of his character in its true beauty and excellencies, in the outward exhibitions which are made of it: unless, indeed, the eternal destruction of sinners is a stain in the divine character, and the dark part of it, which ought

ought to be kept, as much as possible, out of view; lest it should, in the apprehension of creatures, spread a cloud over the ways of God, and draw a veil over the lustre and brightness which would otherwise have been made visible to creatures, in the uninterrupted reign of holiness, and universal felicity and happiness of the creation. Now, however high this representation of the matter may approach to the apprehensions which some entertain of the divine dispensations towards his creatures, in the eternal destruction of sinners; yet nothing can be more palpably impious and absurd. On the contrary, it is an obvious and certain truth, that punitive justice is a real and great excellency of the divine character; and that there is something infinitely amiable, grand and beautiful in the triumphs of the GREAT KING over his obstinate, impenitent enemies. So far is the eternal destruction of sinners from obscuring, in any degree, the divine perfections, that it is an event which greatly illustrates them in their infinite loveliness and true beauty. Creatures have *all the advantage* for discovering the divine excellency and glory, *in the exercises of his mercy and goodness toward the chosen objects of his favour*, which they could possibly have had, if there never had been any such thing as moral evil in the system; yea, and if what hath been said is just, *far greater*: and, superadded to all this, they have the advantage of that full and abundantly clear discovery which is made of the divine purity, goodness and love, in the eternal destruction of the wicked.

If, therefore, a fuller and more abundant discovery and manifestation of the divine perfections, is a *greater good*, than a less clear and visible exhibition of them; then, doubtless, the existence of moral evil is the occasion of greater good. And if a more abundant and extensive exercise of *infinite excellency*, in the production of its natural fruits and genuine effects, is a greater good than a less extensive exercise of it; it will unquestionably follow, that *where* there is the most

most clear and abundant manifestation of the divine perfections, *there* is the greatest good. To say that the most extensive and abundant exercise of *infinite excellency*, in the production of its genuine fruits and effects, is not a greater good than a less full and extensive exercise of it ; is to say that *infinite excellency*, when it exerteth its productive influence, doth not tend to produce GOOD : or, that more and greater fruits of *infinite excellency* are not a *greater good* than less and more sparing fruits of it : either of which is perfectly contradictory and absurd.

Nothing, I apprehend, can be further necessary in order that the following propositions may gain universal credit and assent, than barely to have them *plainly expressed and understood*, viz. That the divine goodness and love, which *particularly appear* in God's opposing his enemies and such as oppose themselves to the public good, *could not have appeared* if there had been no enemies for him to oppose :—That the *advantage* of authority which is *particularly gained* by the everlasting destruction of sinners, *could never have been gained* had there been no sinners to destroy :—That the infinite purity and holiness, and the aversion of the divine mind to sin, which is *particularly exercised and made manifest* in the punishment of sinners, *could not have been exhibited in its fruits to the view of creatures*, if no such thing as moral evil had come into existence in the system. These are certainly manifest and self-evident truths. There needeth no long chain of reasoning to introduce us to the knowledge of them—no string of metaphysics to lead us to certainty in such points as these.

From these considerations it indubitably and demonstrably appeareth, that moral evil—the existence of sin—hath, in fact, been the occasion of *far more and greater good* than ever could any otherwise have been produced.

But however clear and conclusive our *reasoning and argumentation* may appear to be, in the present case ;
it

it will, probably, be more satisfactory to the minds of people, to find that the opinion, that *moral evil* is the occasion of *greater good*, is an opinion evidently favoured by the express declarations of *the word of God*; and that this idea is there plainly suggested to us.

When the matter is properly attended to and considered, it will probably appear that the scriptures are not wanting in their testimony to the truth of the opinion under consideration. I shall, therefore, before I finish the section, mention a few texts of scripture which plainly and manifestly imply that the existence of *moral evil* is the occasion of *greater good*.

1. That the taking place of sin hath been the occasion of *greater good* in the system, is manifestly implied in several things said by the Apostle Paul, in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. Where he draweth the parallel between Adam and Christ; representing them both as sustaining a public character, and their conduct as having a vast and extensive influence upon the several different public bodies of which these two persons were the heads; he taketh special care that this grand distinction be preserved and kept up, notwithstanding the similitude of their character in other respects, viz. That the *benefits and advantages* arising from Christ on the one hand, far outweigh and overbalance the *disadvantages* arising from the ill conduct and wickedness of Adam, on the other. He says, ver. 15. "But *not* as the offence, so also is the *free gift*. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead; *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Here he intimateth, that *grace* aboundeth to a greater extent than the offence itself hath, over which grace is triumphing: that it extends farther than to a bare reparation of the damage done by the offence; making it the occasion of *more good*—a more abundant flow of goodness and grace. And that this was a thing in design with the Deity, is very evident from what is said in the 20th ver.

"Moreover,

“Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might
“abound : but where sin abounded, grace did *much*
“*more* abound.” Now if the taking place of sin hath
been the occasion of the abounding of grace, it hath
been the occasion of the abounding of *Good*. That
which doth not produce *good*, as the fruit of its exer-
cise, cannot be *grace*. There is no *grace* in doing any
thing wherein there is no *good*. But where *grace* is
exercised, there, it is evident, *good* is produced as its
effect. And if *grace* aboundeth, even beyond the *of-
fence* ; or, more than the offence itself which is the
occasion that grace is exercised ; then, surely, there is
more *good* effected by grace, than there was *evil* or
detriment by the offence. If *grace* is *goodness*, and the
exercise of grace, *doing good* ; it cannot truly be said,
that *grace* hath abounded more than the *offence*, unless
the *good* produced by it is greater than the *evil* or *detriment*
occasioned by the *offence*. But if grace more
than repaireth the damage, and maketh good the loss,
sustained by the offence ; it is unquestionably true,
that sin hath been *the occasion of greater good*. If the
offence hath been the occasion of the *grace*, it hath been
the occasion of all that hath been produced by this
grace. And if *grace* is goodness, wherever it is exer-
cised it *produceth good*. And if it hath abounded
more than the *offence*, then the *good* which it hath pro-
duced is *greater* than the *evil* introduced by the *offence*.
And if the *good* produced by *grace* is greater than the
evil introduced by sin, then sin hath been the occasion
of *greater good* than would have been, if this event had
never taken place.

These reasonings are plain, and, I am humbly of
opinion, conclusive. It appeareth to be a main point,
with the Apostle, to make it evident that the grace
which is exercised through Christ, *more than maketh*
good the damages occasioned by the fall of Adam, and
accruing from it. If sin hath occasioned the *abounding*
of *grace*, it hath occasioned the *abounding of goodness*.
And if there is more *grace* exercised than there would

have been if there had been no such thing as *moral evil* in the system ; there is, of consequence, more *goodness* exercised than there would have been, had there been no moral evil. And if the divine goodness, when it is exercised, *doth good*, and is *productive of good* ; the more the exercises of it *abound*, the *more good* is effected and produced. It is, therefore, a doctrine plainly taught by the Apostle, that sin is the occasion of greater good.* In this view of the matter the Psalmist had good reason to say, as in Psal. lxxvi. 10. " Surely " the wrath of man shall praise thee : the remainder " of wrath shalt thou restrain." He, doubtless, saw that the wickedness of men would be the occasion of greater honour and glory to God, and in this way work his praises : which is just the same as to say, that it will be the occasion of *greater Good*.

2. Our Saviour himself gave full testimony to this truth. It appeareth to be his design, by the parable of the lost sheep, Luke xv. to shew the peculiarly strong and lively emotions of joy, which shall be occasioned in heaven by the salvation of *sinners*. He says, ver. 7. " I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over *one sinner* that repenteth, more than over " ninety and nine *just persons* which need no repentance." The inhabitants of heaven, being perfectly *benevolent*, rejoice most in the *greatest good*. A *less good* cannot occasion more joy in them, than a *greater* : this would be inconsistent with the perfect benevolence of

* This is the construction which Dr. Taylor repeatedly puts on the text under consideration. He thinks it abundantly manifest, that it was the design and purpose of the Apostle, in the parallel which he runneth between Adam and Christ, to preserve this important distinction, viz. That the *benefits* accruing from the death of Christ *far outweigh and overbalance* the *disadvantages* occasioned by the fall of Adam. He tells us (in his Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, p. 39.) that " Something in the *free gift* in Christ, answereth to something in " the *offence* of Adam. But have a care, saith the Apostle, you do not imagine " that they are, in all respects, parallel, and that the free gift is *just of the same* " *extent* with the offence and its consequences. Though now I intend to draw " a comparison betwixt them, yet you ought to know, that the *grace and benefits* " in the Redeemer *overflow and abound far beyond* the consequences, the " *ill-effects*, of the first offence." So p. 44. that God hath " in Christ bestowed " *benefits and blessings* upon mankind, of his mere favour, *far exceeding* and " *abounding beyond* the consequences of Adam's sin." To the same purpose doth the Doctor express himself in p. 58. 239. and elsewhere in his book.

of their hearts. And if the salvation of *one sinner* was not a *greater good* than the happiness of *ninety and nine* just persons who need no repentance ; how is it conceivable that there should be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance ?

There is, undoubtedly, more goodness *exercised* in the salvation of *one sinner*, than would or could have been in the happiness of ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance ; and a brighter display of all the divine perfections, which is the great good of the intellectual system : otherwise it could not occasion greater joy in the inhabitants of heaven, whose hearts rejoice *most* in the *greatest good*. And if there is more goodness *exercised* in the former case, than in the latter ; there is, of consequence, *more good* actually effected and produced. If the *former* event was not a *greater good* than the latter ; it would be utterly unaccountable that it should occasion greater joy in heaven—as being an event more pleasing to the benevolent spirits who inhabit it. Accordingly,

3. The exercises of divine MERCY and GRACE are represented, in scripture, as the grand object in view, even in creation, and the great and ultimate end for which our world itself was made. Therefore Paul saith, Ephes. iii. 8, 9, 10. “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among Gentiles the *unsearchable riches of Christ* ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ : to the intent that now unto principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God.*” The church is the medium through which this manifold wisdom of God is to be seen, and to appear. Therefore is it represented, that God created all things *by Christ*, to shew the infinite importance of the mediatorial character in the divine system of government

ernment and administration ; and, that this character lay at the very bottom and foundation of *even the creation*. Accordingly Paul tells us, Coloss. i. 16. that "all things were created by him (Christ) and for him." And ver. 17. that "by him all things consist." And ver. 15. that he is "the *first born* of every creature." And he is said, Rev. iii. 14. to be "the *beginning* of the creation of God." And xiii. 8. he is styled a "lamb slain from the *foundation* of the world." These titles and epithets, and this manner of expression, plainly lead us to consider the investiture of the second person in the glorious Trinity with his mediatorial office and character, as being *original* in all God's works, and the foundation of them all ; and, that the display of the divine perfections, which is made *in this character*, was the *great and ultimate end* of creation. This is the *good* which God designed to bring about and accomplish, in and by the work of creation : which will by no means admit the supposition, that so *great good* could be effected in any other way. Nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent with the divine perfections and character, than to suppose that a method of administration, and of the exhibition of the divine perfections, so *infinitely expensive*, should be chosen by the most perfect and consummate wisdom ; unless *greater good* was to be effected *in this way*, than *could be* in any other. It is infinitely unlikely that the wise and good God should make choice of so expensive a way for accomplishing an end, no better, and no more valuable, than might have been accomplished without this expence.

4. Christ Jesus is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Heb. i. 3. Which words manifestly intimate a *special display* of the divine excellencies and perfections—a *peculiar effulgency* of the divine glory, in the person and character of Christ. And if the existence of moral evil hath been the occasion of Christ's glorious undertaking ; then it has, likewise, been the occasion of the
special

special effulgence of the divine glory, and of the appearance of that peculiar brightness which shines forth in the great work of redemption. If Christ is the brightness of the Father's glory; the Godhead, then, is doubtless exhibiting itself to view with *special and peculiar clearness*, in the person, offices and character of Christ. But can any imagine that God is doing something *peculiarly for his honour and glory*, and which he designeth as a *special brightness and effulgence* of his infinitely perfect and excellent nature; and yet that *no special and peculiar good* is effected and produced? How doth or can the Deity most discover his glory, but in doing the *most good*—effecting the most excellent and valuable ends? Nothing can be more reproachful to God, than to suppose that there is a *special exercise* of his perfections, and a *particular manifestation* of them, in fruits; and yet that no *greater good*, no more *valuable ends*, are thereby effected and accomplished. This would be the same as to say, that the peculiar excellency and glory of the divine Being doth not consist in an ability and disposition to do the most excellent things.

5. Another argument in favour of the opinion under consideration may be drawn from the express, manifest design of the Deity, in raising up Pharaoh, and suffering so long his most bold, arrogant and daring opposition to him; and the very *great good* which was, through this means, accomplished.

It is very manifest that the opposition of Pharaoh and his people, to the God of Israel, turned out, in event, greatly to the honour of God. It was the occasion of his being signally honoured, and wonderfully glorified. A *peculiar good* by this means was effected—a great and wonderful establishment of his authority and supremacy—a fear of his great and glorious name—an extensive spread of the knowledge of it—and a great awe and reverence of Jehovah begotten in the hearts of men. These are ends peculiarly valuable and excellent, and worthy to be accomplished at great
expense.

expencc. Therefore God saith, Exod. ix. 16. "And
"in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up,
"for to shew in thee my power; and that my name
"may be declared throughout all the earth."

Pharaoh and his people, who so oppressed Israel, very manifestly in figure represented satan and his children. They were designed as a figurative representation of the powers of darkness, engaged against Christ and his glorious cause. The people of Israel, in a figure, represented the whole Church of Christ. Therefore it is that the saints in heaven, who have gotten the victory over satan, are represented, Rev. xv. 3. as singing the song of MOSES and the song of the Lamb. And if the opposition of Pharaoh and his people, to the God of Israel, was the occasion of *greater good*; doubtless the opposition of satan and his followers, to Christ, will likewise be the occasion of *greater good*. If the sin of one is over-ruled to greater good, the sin of another, also, is; and, without question, the sin of all. So that, upon the whole, it is abundantly evident, there will be more glory to God, and more good in the system, than if sin had never taken place.

Other arguments to the point in hand might be collected out of the holy scriptures; but I study brevity: and the observations which have been already made upon the express declarations of the word of God, are sufficient to shew, that the opinion of *greater good* being occasioned by the existence of moral evil, was not unknown to the sacred writers; nor is this a doctrine of human invention, upon which the *scriptures* are silent, and into which they give us no light and information.

S E C T. II.

Shewing that it was, upon the whole, a desirable thing, that MORAL EVIL should take place in the system.

IF it is once admitted, that the existence of moral evil is the occasion of *greater good*; and that it was a *necessary means* of having the *greatest good* effected and produced; it will follow, of course, that it was, upon the whole, a desirable thing that such an event should take place in the intelligent system. If a greater good is, upon the whole, desirable, in preference to a less; then, doubtless, every thing which is necessary to the accomplishment of the greater good, is also desirable. To say that any end is, upon the whole, desirable, is to say that all the necessary means of the accomplishment of this end are also desirable. To say that any end is, upon the whole, desirable; and yet that the means through which alone this end is capable of being effected and accomplished, are, upon the whole, undesirable; is perfectly contradictory and absurd. For however undesirable the means may be, in themselves considered, and for their own sake; yet if the expence of the means is not equal to the gain attending the end; the means, however disagreeable in themselves, yet, upon the whole, and in a relative view of them, are desirable. If the *Good*, contained and comprehended in the final issue and event, outweighs and overbalanceth the evil attending the means which are *necessary* in order to the accomplishment of it; in that case the *END*, considered in its whole connexion, and in its necessary relation to the means whereby it is effected, may with truth and propriety be said to be *desirable and good*. And if the existence of moral evil is a necessary means of the *greater Good*; there can be no reasonable objection against the taking place of such an event; but, on the
other

other hand, a *perfectly benevolent* heart would naturally and necessarily desire the existence of it.

Only, I request that the following things may be carefully remembered and kept in mind, when I speak of the *desirableness* of such an event.

1. That there is nothing in the *nature* of moral evil which is in itself desirable ; this, the argument under consideration doth not suppose. There is nothing in the nature of sin, but what is, *in itself and for its own sake, infinitely abominable and hateful*. Sin is perfectly hateful in itself, and in its own nature, for being what it is, without any relation to any thing out of itself, either as *cause* or *effect*. Such is the *intrinsic nature* of sin, that it is absolutely impossible that the *pure and holy mind of God* should view it otherwise than with the *most entire and perfect abhorrence*.

Nor is there any thing in sin, of *whatever other event it may be the occasion and means*, that is not altogether hateful and abominable in the eyes of *good and holy men*. Yea, let it be the occasion of what else it will, it is *essential* to the character, and is one principal evidence, of true goodness, utterly to hate, abhor and detest it. And the more any one groweth in grace, and increaseth in holiness and nearness to God, the more will he necessarily hate sin, and be displeased with it.

2. There is nothing in the *tendency* of sin, on account of which it is desirable. Whatever *Good*, sin may be the *means and occasion* of, through the overruling hand of infinite wisdom and power ; still there is *no tendency* in moral evil itself to any *Good*, which might reasonably induce any one to choose and prefer the existence of it.

If the Deity taketh occasion, from the existence of moral evil, to bring about *any thing* which is valuable and good ; it is by resisting the natural tendency of moral evil itself, and overruling it as a means of the accomplishment of an end *directly the reverse*

reverse of that, to which moral evil itself naturally tendeth.*

3. It is only in a *relative view* that the existence of moral evil can, with any propriety, be said to be desirable. It is easily conceivable that something, which is very evil and undesirable *in itself, and for its own sake*, may yet stand so related to something which is *in itself good and excellent*, as to make it, upon the whole, desirable. An event, which *for its own sake* is justly to be dreaded and abhorred, may, nevertheless, stand so related to another event, which is *in itself and for its own sake very desirable*, as to become the object of a virtuous and benevolent desire. There is nothing inconceivable in supposing the same event to be, in one view, desirable; and, in another, undesirable. A very strong and pregnant instance of this sort we have in the death of Christ. Such was his abhorrence of the sufferings which were before him, that he prayed the Father, that, "*if it were possible, that cup might pass from him.*" Mat. xxvi. 39. And yet nothing is more evident than that this event, considered in all its consequences and connexions, was *chosen* and considered as being *desirable* by our blessed Lord. For when, his soul being troubled, he prayed, "Father, save me from this hour;" he immediately addeth, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." John xii. 27, 28. Here is an event, which, it is abundantly evident, our Saviour, *in one view of it*, exceedingly dreaded and abhorred; yet, *in another*, made the object of an actual preference and choice. To suffer God's displeasure, and die under his wrath, our Lord considered a very great evil; and

A a

yet,

* "Sin in its own nature hath no tendency to good; 'tis not an apt medium, hath no proper efficacy, to promote the glory of God: so far is it from a direct contributing to it, that on the contrary it is most real dishonour to him. But as a black ground in a picture, which in itself only defiles, when placed by art sets off the brighter colours, and brightens their beauty; so the evil of sin, which, considered absolutely, obscures the glory of God, yet, by the overruling disposition of his providence, it serves to illustrate his name, and make it more glorious in the esteem of reasonable creatures. *Without the sin of man, there had been no place for the most perfect exercise of his goodness.*" (See Bates on the harmony of the divine attributes, edit. III. p. 81, 82.)

yet, in its real relation to that great and infinite good effected by the death of Christ, and its connexion with it, it was really *preferred* and *chosen* by our blessed Lord.

These things being premised, I proceed to offer the following arguments to consideration, in proof of its being *upon the whole* a desirable thing that moral evil should come into existence.

It is absolutely desirable, in the nature of things, that the *greatest good* should be actually effected and produced. The idea of *good* always implieth *desirableness*. Every thing which is *good*, is, in that view, and so far, desirable: to suppose the contrary is contradictory and absurd. The greater any conceivable *good* is, the more desirable is it that it should come into existence. The *greatest good*, therefore, is *most desirable*; a heart perfectly benevolent and virtuous will most ardently desire it, and be perfectly set upon it.

2. That which is desirable, *upon the whole*, is desirable considered in all its relations, consequences and connexions. When an event may be said, upon the whole, to be truly desirable; all the means which are necessary to the existence of that event, are also desirable. To suppose any thing, though desirable in itself and for its own sake, yet, in a relative view and in connexion with the necessary means of its accomplishment, undesirable; is to suppose that *it is not, upon the whole*, all things being considered, a desirable thing that the event should come into existence. But when an event, considered in all its relations and connexions, is really desirable; that is a consideration which rendereth it a desirable thing that those subordinate events, which are necessary means of its accomplishment, should also come into existence. When we wish for an event, we wish for every thing which is necessary to that event, and necessarily connected with it. And though the means may be, in their nature and on their own account, undesirable; yet, in a relative view,

view, and considered as in connexion with the event, they are desirable. Nor doth it argue any love to the means *for their own sake*, for any one really to desire and wish for them. This, also, may be illustrated by that very marvellous event, the death of Christ. The crucifixion of the Lord of glory; *considered as transacted by sinners*, and being the strongest opposition to infinite excellency and goodness, and a most surprising effect of the enmity of the hearts of men against God; was the most abominable and hateful event that was ever transacted here in our world: And yet this same event, considered in its relation to the glory of God and the salvation of sinners, was the most desirable and happy event that ever took place in any part of the system. This being an event which hath so *favourable an aspect upon the felicity of lost men*; we do not hear mankind complain of it as *strange doctrine*, utterly inconsistent with the idea of the great and infinite evil of sin, to represent the death of Christ as being, *upon the whole*, a desirable event. And if the crucifixion of our Lord was, upon the whole, a desirable event; then that conduct of the Jews, which was necessary to the taking place of this event, was also desirable. But this conduct of the Jews was, in itself, infinitely evil and sinful; and, therefore, in itself, most abominable and hateful. Yet even this conduct, wicked and sinful as it was, in the state wherein things then actually were, and in its relation to that which was the great and principal end of the death of Christ, was unquestionably desirable. Nor are men wont to exclaim against it as a doctrine tending to licentiousness, when the crucifixion of our Lord is represented as upon the whole a desirable event.—It therefore followeth,

3. That whatever standeth in such a relation to *an event which is desirable upon the whole*, as to be essential to the existence of that event, and a necessary means of its taking place, is, also, itself desirable. It is desirable that that event, whatever it is, should take place, without which the greatest good cannot be accomplish-

ed, and something, which is upon the whole desirable, cannot come into existence. Whatever sin, therefore, is a *necessary* means of the *greatest good*, it is a desirable thing that it should exist and take place in event. But it hath been before shown, that sin is the occasion of greater good : yea, and that the imperfection of created nature is such, that this greater good *could not* possibly be effected without the intervention of sin, or the taking place of moral evil in the system.

4. It is desirable, in the nature of things, that the disposition of the divine mind towards sin, should most clearly and fully appear to the views and apprehensions of rational, intelligent creatures. That which is lovely and beautiful *in itself*, must also be lovely and beautiful *in its appearance*. That which is excellent *in its existence*, must likewise be excellent *in its exercise*. That which it is a desirable thing that it should *exist*, is also a desirable thing should be *exercised* : for if the *exercise* is not desirable, the *existence* also is not desirable. If it is, therefore, a desirable thing that the *real hatred of the divine mind to sin* should *exist*, it is a desirable thing that it should be *exercised*. And if it is a desirable thing that hatred of the divine mind to sin should be *manifested and appear*, it was a desirable thing that there should be *suitable objects* toward whom this disposition of the divine mind might be manifested and appear. If it is a desirable thing that the hatred of the divine mind to sin should be *exercised*, it is of course a desirable thing that there should be some proper objects toward whom to exercise it. And on whom is it possible that God should exercise and manifest his hatred of sin, but *the sinner* ? It is, therefore, in the nature of things, desirable that such beings as sinners should exist in the intelligent system : consequently, a desirable thing that moral evil should come into existence.

5. That exercise of the divine goodness, which is, in scripture, by way of eminence, called GRACE, is represented as the very glory of the divine nature ; and the display and discovery of it, the great and principal

cipal end of creation. And as it was, in the nature of things, desirable that *the riches of divine mercy and grace* should be manifested and displayed, and appear and be exhibited in their natural and genuine fruits ; so it was desirable, in the nature of things, that there should exist, somewhere in the intelligent system, objects of *mercy* or of *grace*. It is easy to see that there could have been no room for *mercy* and *grace* to be exercised, had moral evil never taken place. The holy and virtuous, who never rebelled against God, though they have not in them any proper *desert* of that favour and goodness which is constantly exercised towards them ; yet, it is very evident, are not properly objects of *mercy* and *grace*. The *mercy* and *grace* of God are exercised only toward sinners—the ill-deserving. The divine goodness never could have appeared in that peculiar glory and brightness, which, in scripture, are called *GRACE*, if there had been no sinners to become the subjects of it. And as *mercy* and *grace* are represented as being the *peculiar glory and perfection of God* ; so was it peculiarly desirable that they should appear, and be exhibited in their fruits, to the views of intelligent creatures. And, therefore, it was a desirable thing, and what would be the object of the real wish of an infinitely benevolent heart, that there might be and exist a *proper and suitable occasion* for the exercise and discovery of that peculiarly beautiful and glorious attribute of God called *grace* : consequently it was really, in the nature of things, desirable that moral evil should take place. As it was, in the nature of things, desirable that the peculiar brightness and glory of the divine character should *appear* ; so was it desirable that there should be some *medium* through which *creatures* might be enabled to behold it. Without *some medium*, it followeth from what hath been before said respecting the *natural imperfection inseparable from the very idea of CREATURE*, and the inability of *creatures* to behold and perceive the divine perfections any otherwise than as appearing in fruits and effects, that
they

they never could behold and apprehend that in God, which is called his *grace*. There can be no *medium* through which creatures are capable of beholding divine *mercy* and *grace*, but *that unworthiness* and *ill-desert* there is in a sinner. And *that unworthiness* and *ill-desert*, every one may see, cannot exist, unless there is a sinner—unless moral evil taketh place.

If it is only acknowledged, that the *mercy* and *grace* of God are his *peculiar glory*, or a *peculiar brightness* and *full exercise* of his inherent excellency; it will manifestly follow, that the *exercises* of divine *mercy* and *grace* do *peculiar good* in the system, and effect purposes and designs which are *peculiarly excellent*; being productive of a *more valuable end* than could have been effected without the discovery and exercise of them.

If the system would have been *as perfect and complete* without moral evil; the divine character, of course, would have been *as excellent and beautiful* without *that* in it, which *peculiarly and especially* appeareth and is manifested both in the exercises of his *mercy* and *grace*, and also in the eternal punishment of the wicked. For in a system perfectly without sin, there would never have been any occasion for these *peculiar glories* of the Deity—this *splendor* of the divine character; nor, opportunity for the least degree of the exercise thereof. And certainly the divine character would be as absolutely perfect *without that* which never could be exercised and appear in fruits—there being no possible opportunity for it, as *with it*. And if, in the nature of things, the divine character might have been as absolutely perfect and complete without *that* in God, which *peculiarly* appeareth and is manifested, both in the exercises of his *grace* toward the vessels of his *mercy*, and the exercises of his power and justice toward the vessels of his *wrath*; it then followeth, that this *mercy* and this *justice*, *in these peculiar exercises of them*, are not *essential* to the absolute perfection of the divine character. If there might have been a system *equally perfect*

perfect as the present, without sin or moral evil in it ; then there might have been a character equally perfect as that which now belongeth to Jehovah, i. e. absolutely complete and fitted for every excellency which could ever appear, and adequate to every valuable purpose which could ever be effected, without those particular qualities which are manifested in the exercises of mercy, and of punitive justice. And if it was possible that there should have been, in the nature of things, a character so absolute and complete, without mercy and punitive justice ; then there is no necessity, in the nature of things, for the existence of these peculiar attributes and qualities. And if there is no necessity, in the nature of things, for the existence of them ; then they do not exist by a necessity of nature. And if they do not exist by a necessity of nature, they are no part of the being and character of Him who doth exist by a necessity of nature—the necessary Being, who is God.

So inconsistent and atheistical is it, to suppose that there might, in the nature of things, have been *perfection of character, i. e. adequateness to the most valuable purposes and designs, without mercy and punitive justice !* (As, it is undoubtedly certain, every valuable purpose that could have been accomplished in a system perfectly free from moral evil, might have been effected without these attributes and qualities.) And so inconsistent and atheistical is it, therefore, to suppose that there might have been *perfection of design and operation* in the formation and management of a system entirely free from all moral evil and sin !

These considerations, I am humbly of opinion, do fully and clearly prove, that, upon the whole, it was a desirable thing that moral evil should come into existence : Yea, and that it must of necessity be so, and could not otherwise be, than that an infinitely perfect and benevolent Being would choose and prefer the existence of such an event.

It may, however, in some measure serve to illustrate the argument under consideration, and occasion its carrying

carrying more full conviction, to mention one or two of the evil and bad consequences which will certainly follow from the supposition that the existence of moral evil—the taking place of sin—in the system, is, upon the whole, an undesirable event.

1. If it would really have been better, upon the whole, in the nature of things, that moral evil should never have come into existence; then God hath not ordered and disposed things in so excellent a manner, and to so good advantage, as they might, in the nature of things, have been ordered and disposed. To say that there *could not* have been a system without sin, and yet that such a system would have been most perfect and complete; is to say, that there *could not* have been a system which was *absolutely perfect*: And this is to say that *absolute perfection* is an impossible thing; which at once denieth it to be in God, or in his system of operation and administration. To say that there *could have been* such a system, and that such an one would have been *more perfect*; is, therefore, to say that God hath not ordered and disposed things in a manner *so* perfect and excellent as that wherein they are capable of being ordered and disposed. Consequently, the traces of *infinite wisdom* and *consummate skill* do not appear in the disposition and arrangement of things under the present system of government and administration:—But, I may rather say, the traces of *gross over-sight and mistake*. Yea, and it will follow, that we have no reason, from any thing which we can see and behold, either in the word or works of *the God of Israel*, to conclude that he is absolutely perfect; but the fullest assurance, on the contrary, that he is infinitely far from it.

2. If it is *in any degree* undesirable, upon the whole, that moral evil should come into existence; it is a thing *infinitely* undesirable. If the undesirableness of such an event is urged from the consideration of the *evil nature* of sin; the same argument, if it will prove any thing, will prove this event to be *infinitely* undesirable,

firable, i. e. that it is, upon the whole, an *infinitely undesirable* thing that moral evil should ever come into existence. For if the undesirableness of the *existence and taking place* of such an event, ariseth from the consideration of the *evil nature and tendency of the event itself*; the undesirableness of its existence is, doubtless, in proportion to the *evil nature and tendency of sin*. But the nature and tendency of sin being perfectly evil, and infinitely so; any undesirableness of the existence of the event *arising from the nature of it*, must, also, be perfect and infinite. The argument, therefore, drawn from the *evil nature* of sin, to prove that it was an undesirable thing, upon the whole, that any such event should ever take place in the intellectual system; if it proveth any thing, will prove that, upon the whole, all things being considered, and the final issue of the present system and scene of operation being taken into view, it was a most perfectly—yea, even *infinitely undesirable* thing that there ever should be any such event.

3. If, therefore, the existence of moral evil in the system, was an event, on the whole, so exceedingly undesirable; good men will always regret and lament it, and be unhappy under the thought that such an event hath been ever suffered to intrude itself into existence. The more men increase in virtue and benevolence, the more do they increase in their aversion to the *nature and tendency* of sin. And the more their minds are opened and extended in the knowledge and view of truth, the more do they see and discern of the evil nature and tendency of sin. If, therefore, the existence of moral evil was, upon the whole, an undesirable event; the more good men increase in virtue and knowledge, the greater will be their solicitude, impatience and unhappiness. And when they arrive in a world of perfect virtue, and full and clear light; where all ignorance and error shall be done away, and every corrupt inclination and passion be mortified and suppressed; they will be entirely overwhelmed with

the deepest sorrow and most perfect regret : and heaven, instead of being a place of light and joy, will afford them a more gloomy scene, and melancholy view and prospect of things, than they ever yet imagined and beheld. An increase of light and greater maturity of virtue, instead of being a means of *increasing* happiness, as hath generally been supposed, will serve only more and more to convince of the *fatal* error which is in fact to be found in the system of God : and the full light of eternity, instead of filling the soul with the most perfect pleasure and delight, will give inexpressible pain and anguish of heart.

4. If it is an undesirable thing upon the whole that moral evil should take place, God himself, who hath an infinite love of righteousness—of moral excellency and beauty, must be infinitely more crossed and disappointed in this event, than any or all other beings in the whole system. The aversion of the divine mind to the evil nature of sin, is infinitely greater than that of all created intelligences together. And if the thought of this event is fitted, and in its nature tendeth to give pain and anguish to the virtuous part of the *creation*, much, yea *infinitely* more is it fitted and doth it tend to give pain and anguish to the infinitely virtuous and all-comprehending mind of God. If the infinite and all-seeing mind of the Deity had the least degree of reluctance to the existence of such an event in his system ; he had an *infinite* reluctance to it : for there is no property, quality or excellency of the divine mind, which is not infinite. And if the divine will was really and truly in opposition to the taking place of such an event ; of consequence it was *infinitely opposed* by the coming into existence of this event, and was *resisted* with such an amazing degree of strength and power as entirely frustrated, vanquished and overcame it. So that, upon the principle of the real undesirableness of the taking place of moral evil in the system, JEHOVAH is the *most miserable* being in the universe ; and his glorious mind is overwhelmed with
infinite

infinite sorrow, grief and distress. These considerations, I am humbly of opinion, do *clearly shew*—yea, *perfectly demonstrate*, that in the view of the DEITY, that is, in the view of *impartial, perfect reason—strict, exact truth*, it was not, on the whole, all things being considered, an *undesirable thing* that moral evil should come into existence. And when it is proved, to the conviction of the understandings of men, that the existence of such an event, in the intellectual system, was not, upon the whole, *undesirable*; people will meet with no difficulty, I apprehend, in admitting the reasonableness of the supposition, of the *positive desirableness* of the existence and taking place of such an event.

S E C T. III.

Wherein it is shewn that such a positive divine agency and disposal, as would give INFALLIBLE CERTAINTY to the existence of MORAL EVIL in the system, are not inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God.

IF such a disposal of things as shall give infallible certainty of the existence of moral evil in the system, and actually issue in that event; and if God's adjusting and arranging things in a manner and order tending to such an issue; is wise and proper—agreeable to the dictates of the most perfect and consummate wisdom—it will be abundantly manifest that such a *positive disposal and agency as would infallibly insure the future existence and taking place of moral evil in the system*, is not inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God. For,

I. That which is not inconsistent with perfect and consummate wisdom, is not inconsistent with the most perfect purity and holiness. Whatever is not inconsistent with perfect wisdom to *design, dictate and direct*; is not inconsistent with the purity and holiness of the most wise Being, to *effect and accomplish*. Wisdom never dictateth any thing, inconsistent with purity and holiness.

holiness. Where wisdom approveth, purity and holiness equally approve. Whatever offendeth purity, is forbidden by wisdom : for these two attributes perfectly harmonize with each other.

It is the part of *wisdom* to form noble and excellent designs ; and to devise the best means and methods for accomplishing them. This seems to be the peculiar end and principal province of wisdom. Noble and excellent *ends*, together with a prudent adjustment and adaptedness of *means* to the accomplishment of them, are the strongest testimonies and indications of wisdom. In both these ways is the wisdom of God indubitable, and unquestionably clear, in such an adjustment and disposition of things as would give certain futurity to the event in question. For it hath been shown that the taking place of sin hath been the occasion of an abundantly more perfect and complete exhibition of the divine perfections, to the views of creatures ; and a more full and perfect manifestation of them in their proper and genuine fruits, than could possibly have been made, if moral evil had never existed. And, consequently, that there is a more clear understanding, and perfect and sensible perception of the divine excellencies, in the system of created intelligences, than there would have been, if sin had never taken place ; and, of course, *more good done* in the system. It hath been shown that the existence of moral evil hath been the occasion of *far more and greater good* in the system ; yea, of *greater good* than could possibly have been effected otherwise than by the intervention of moral evil.

And if this is in fact the case, (which I beg leave, after what hath been said upon it, to consider as being certainly proved,) there is no room left to question the wisdom of the *projection* of such a system as this, in all the variety of its parts : or, to imagine that the moral evil which taketh place in it, indicateth any want of prudent foresight and wise design. But rather, if what hath been said is just, the existence of moral evil
in

in the system, when the scene is so far opened to view as to enable us to judge of the issue of things, is a certain proof and pregnant instance of the consummate wisdom of the Grand Projector of this extended, complicated system.

And when we consider, farther, how a scene of guilt, misery and wickedness prepares such imperfect creatures as we are, for a proper and entire submission to God, and for apprehending the mercy and grace of God in their abundant riches and freedom ; and most sensibly relishing and apprehending that salvation and relief which is provided for sinful men, in the gospel of Christ : I say, when we duly attend to these considerations, and give them their proper and just weight ; we shall not have any occasion to apprehend any *defect* of wisdom, in the means and methods of God's own devising for effecting the greatest good, and accomplishing the most valuable ends of creation. But, on the contrary, if we examine with honest and upright hearts, we cannot but discern *in the present system of divine administration and government*, notwithstanding the moral evil which cometh into existence under it, the strongest marks and most evident traces of perfect, consummate wisdom and skill.

It is abundantly manifest, that God's adopting the present plan of operation, and system of administration and government, hath *in fact* been the occasion of the existence of moral evil. And that God foresaw this event, and foresaw it to be infallibly connected with that particular exertion of his own power, which should be productive of *such a system as he hath created*, is what cannot be denied, without avowed opposition to the word of God. Was this exertion of the divine power under the direction of *wisdom* ? Is it worthy the character and *wisdom* of God, to form *such a system*, and *in such a manner* to adjust and balance the various parts and proportions of it ? But if a system, so formed, balanced and adjusted in its several proportions and parts as is *in fact* attended and followed by

by the taking place of sin, is no reproach to the wisdom of God *when actually appearing in event*; it is no reproach to the wisdom of God, to suppose such a system to exist in *divine design*, even in a full, particular and perfect view of its being attended and followed by such an event. If moral evil is not a real blemish in the *government* of God; it is as little so, considered as existing in *divine design*. Nothing can be wise, as appearing *in event*, which is unwise, as entertained *in design*. That which is no argument of a defect in wisdom, when existing *in event*, will never argue any defect of wisdom, as entertained *in purpose and design*. If it was wise in the Deity to enter upon a system of operation, which should *in fact* be accompanied and followed by such an event; it was equally wise in him, actually to *fore-ordain* such an event, and to dispose and order things *with an express purpose and design* to give infallible futurity to the existence of moral evil—the taking place of sin. And I see not how any one can suppose that such a *divine agency and positive disposal* of things as shall give infallible certainty to the existence of such an event, is any blemish in the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe, or indicateth any defect of wisdom in him, or is any way unworthy of him; without imagining that the moral evil now in the system, is an *actual reproach* to God; rendering it impossible that intelligent creatures should perfectly and entirely acquiesce in him.

To say that God did not foresee any such event as being *certainly and infallibly connected*, by way of consequence, with his own *positive agency and disposal*, is to relieve one attribute at the expence of another: which doth no honor to the name of God. But it is, on the other hand, most reproachful to him, to suppose that any thing which God hath ordered and done, rendereth *such a salvo* needful for his character. On the other hand, it is exceedingly manifest, that whatever *in event* is no argument of defect of wisdom in the system and government of God, would be no argument

gument of any defect in wisdom, considered as entertained in *positive purpose and design*. If the event of moral evil, *when in actual existence*, doth in fact not render the divine wisdom questionable and suspicious; surely it can afford no pretext for calling the same wisdom in question, when considered as existing in *divine purpose and design*. To say otherwise, would be the same as to urge that the *less* is an argument of imperfection, where the *greater* is not:—a method of argumentation very ill adapted to administer conviction. He, therefore, who will be bold enough to venture on a full and confident belief that the present system, *in all and every of its parts and events*, is wisely ordered and disposed; need apprehend no danger in assuredly believing that *such a system, in all its parts*, did actually previously exist in *divine purpose and design*. Consequently, such a divine disposal as infallibly insured the existence and taking place of moral evil; yea, *and of set purpose and with express view* to this event; is no argument of any the least defect in the wisdom of God: and therefore is, in no way, inconsistent with his purity and holiness.

II. It is in no degree inconsistent with the divine purity, for the Deity to exert a positive agency for the production of *that* which is necessary in order to a more full and perfect discovery of the purity and holiness of God, and a more bright and glorious manifestation of it. Purity and holiness are not opposed by those exertions of divine power which are necessary in order to a more clear and perfect discovery, and a more full and complete exercise, of holiness and purity. God discovereth no liking and approbation of sin, in any exercises of power which have for their object and *final cause*, a more perfect discovery of the *hatred* and *aversion*, of his holy and pure nature, to sin. God doth not manifest an *approbation* of sin, in any thing which he doth with a view to render visible his *hatred* to it; and which, in fact, serveth as a medium to *creatures* of a more clear and perfect discovery of this
aversion

aversion and hatred. These things are obvious.

Now, as was observed before, whatever is the actual issue and event of the divine operations, *that*, we may conclude, was the *final cause* and *reason* of them, and the object really in view in those operations. The end which appeareth to be *eventually* answered, by the existence and taking place of moral evil, was, doubtless, the *end in view* in those operations and disposals which were the cause and ground of the existence of such an event. But that the existence of moral evil hath been the occasion and reason of a fuller manifestation and clearer discovery of the spotless purity and holiness of God, and the infinite opposition of the divine mind to sin, than otherwise would have been ever made; is what cannot, I think, with the least reason, be denied. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that *this was an object in view*, in that agency and those divine operations which gave certainty to the future existence of moral evil, and were the cause of it. Whether a manifestation of the hatred of God to sin, and the infinite aversion of his holy and pure nature to moral evil, were the *only, or chief and principal*, end of this agency and operation, is not necessary to be determined: it is sufficient, in the present case, if it appeareth that it was *an end* really and ultimately in view. For if it is manifest that any particular divine agency and disposal had, for their object, a more perfect discovery of the infinite hatred and opposition of the divine mind to sin; it will be abundantly evident, that such an agency and disposal are not repugnant to the divine purity; and, in their nature and operation, inconsistent with the divine hatred to sin:—Unless, indeed, the infinitely wise and all-knowing God hath been guilty of so gross an oversight and mistake, as totally to subvert, by his own agency and operation, the very end, design and object in view, in that very agency and operation. But no one can imagine that the divine Being is capable of such oversight and mistake. If, therefore, the existence of moral evil hath
been

been the occasion of a more perfect discovery and manifestation of the divine purity and hatred of sin : and if we may safely conclude that this manifestation and discovery were the end in view—the objective ground of that divine agency and disposal which gave certainty to the existence of moral evil, and were the cause of it ; it must then be abundantly manifest and clear, to any one who will examine with impartiality and candour, that such a *divine agency and disposal* of things as should certainly be followed by the taking place of sin, are, by no means, inconsistent with the divine purity and holiness ; but, on the contrary, in their issue and event, exhibit the strongest evidences and most abundant testimonies of the infinite strength of the opposition of the pure and holy nature of God, to sin.

III. Whatever divine agency and disposal are the occasion and means of a more perfect and full discovery and manifestation of the *divine goodness and love* ; are, in no measure, inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God. The divine purity and holiness summarily consist in *love*. Whatever manifesteth love, manifesteth also holiness and purity. Whatever manifesteth a disposition of mind, which hath for its object the *greatest general good* ; doth, to an equal degree, manifest *love* : for in such a disposition as this it is, that love primarily and essentially consisteth. But it hath been before proved, that moral evil is the occasion of *greater good*, in the system, than could otherwise have been effected and produced. Consequently, a *purpose and design* in the divine mind, and an *agency and disposal* of the divine hand, which should be eventually introductory of moral evil, into the created system ; are no way inconsistent with the divine character, or repugnant to his holiness, his purity, his love.

When God, in his moral kingdom and government, actually effecteth the *most excellent purposes and designs* ; it very ill becometh his creatures, to find fault, and be dissatisfied with the means and methods which his infinite wisdom hath chosen for producing and accom-

plishing them. When *the end* is confessedly good, why will not that justify the means *by and through which* it was effected? He that is not, upon the whole, dissatisfied with the *end accomplished*; will not be dissatisfied with the *means whereby it is effected*: to find fault with the latter, will be inconsistent with his approbation of the former. He that is not dissatisfied with that character of the Deity, of which sin hath been the occasion and means of a more perfect and full discovery and manifestation; will not be dissatisfied with that character of the Deity, which exhibiteth him as disposing things in his system in such a manner as shall insure the existence and taking place of sin. He who is convinced that the *divine goodness and love* appear in a more strong and glorious light than could have been, if moral evil never had taken place; will never suppose that such a divine agency and disposal as gave certain futurity to the existence of such an event, are inconsistent with the goodness and love of God. I may say farther: he who doth not imagine that the appearances and manifestations of the goodness and love of God *are actually lessened and diminished* by means of the existence of moral evil, and the entrance of sin into the system; will never imagine such a positive agency and disposal as give certainty to this event, to be inconsistent with the goodness and love of God. For that which doth not, upon the whole, hinder and obstruct the *appearances* of divine love; is not inconsistent with divine love. *That* must be a very strange and uncommon kind of a repugnancy and opposition to love, and extremely weak—yea, *utterly without strength*, so as even to cease to be *opposition and repugnancy*; which, in its tendency and utmost exertion, doth not, in the least degree, hinder and obstruct the appearances and manifestations of love.

But will any one presume to say that the *appearances* of divine love and goodness are actually diminished and lessened by *any thing* that doth exist, and hath, in fact, taken place? Any one that will say this, must
of

of course say, that the divine character doth not *appear* to be absolutely and in the highest degree perfect in goodness and love : which is at once to renounce JEHOVAH, the God of Israel. And if nothing which hath ever taken place, hath really lessened and prevented the *appearances* of divine love ; then nothing that has ever, in fact, taken place, hath been *in such a sense inconsistent* with the divine love, as to argue any *defect*, and indicate any *deficiency* of goodness, in God. And if nothing that hath ever taken place is, in this sense, inconsistent with the goodness of God ; then that disposal and agency of his, which made certain the existence of moral evil, were, in no degree, inconsistent with the divine goodness and love.

And upon the argument respecting a supposed inconsistency of a *divine agency and disposal* in favour of the existence of the event in question, with the purity and holiness of God ; I would observe, once more,

IV. That no *mere exercise of power* doth at all, of itself, illustrate and display *moral character*. By a mere discernment of the natural power—the strength there is in the LORD of hosts—we never could form any judgment of the qualities of his mind—his moral attributes and character. None of the exertions of the *mere power* of God, do, in themselves absolutely considered, either *oppose*, or *concur with*, the divine goodness. The only way wherein the exertions of *power* illustrate *character*, is by the ends which its exertions accomplish—the purposes which they effect. If the exertions of *power* are under the direction of *wisdom* ; they are, then, consistent with a perfect *moral character* : if they are not under the direction and guidance of *wisdom* ; they do, of course, discover *imperfection* of moral character. When exertions of *power* are not under the direction of *wise design*, they are a blemish in the moral character of the being whose exertions they are. But when *power* is exerted to *effect* excellent purposes and designs, it then serves as an ornament of the moral character, illustrating and displaying it.

If the present system, in all its parts, is beautiful and excellent, and every way worthy the divine Architect; no exertions of the divine power, of which the present system, *as it is*, is the fruit and effect, are inconsistent with any part of the moral character of God. * And if the existence of moral evil is not such a blemish in the system, as to be a real blemish in the moral character of the glorious Contriver and Architect; it will manifestly follow, that a positive divine agency and disposal, which should have for their effect the existence of moral evil, are neither a blemish in the moral character of God, nor inconsistent with any attribute of it. But if the existence of sin is the occasion of *greater good*, considered merely as an event, distinct from its innate qualities, it doth honour to God. And if the existence of this event, *in this view of it*, doth honour to God, being the occasion of a more full and perfect discovery of the excellencies of his moral character; then the exertions of power, which are the cause and reason of the existence of such an effect, are so far from being reproachful to the purity and holiness of God, that they rather serve to illustrate, establish and confirm this infinitely excellent and glorious character.

S E C T.

* We have, strictly speaking, no other idea of the *power* of God, than that of the connexion of events with his will. His *power* intendeth nothing more than *that will* of his which hath events which are its objects connected with it. But the *power* of God is generally reckoned not among his *moral attributes*. The *exercise* of this power is unquestionably under the direction of wisdom, and therefore serveth to display moral character: but, considered merely as *that will* which such events as are its objects are connected, it is no part of the *moral character* of God. The *WILL* of God, which is the rule of duty to creatures, is his *benevolence and love*—that disposition whereby he is necessarily pleased with love and benevolence in his creatures. And as this benevolence and love are the only *moral, spiritual beauty* of the divine nature: by such a disposition only is it possible for creatures to be spiritually united to him, and please and obey him. This lets us see that *that will* of the Deity which giveth existence and being to events, and *that will* of his which is expressed in the precepts of his *moral law*, are no more the same, than the *power* and the *holiness* of God are one and the same.

S E C T. IV.

Objections considered and refuted.

ALTHOUGH an answer to the principal objections which can be made against the doctrine of a special divine agency and disposal, giving infallible certainty to the future existence of moral evil, hath been; as I apprehend, in a considerable measure anticipated, in the preceding sections; a more particular and critical examination of them, however, may serve more fully to illustrate the subject under consideration; and, probably, will not be unsatisfactory to the reader. This, therefore, shall be the subject of the present section.

OBJ. I. For God to put forth any positive exertions of his own divine and almighty power, which should, either mediately or immediately, be productive of such an *effect*; and, whereby he actually purposed and designed to bring *moral evil* into existence, in the system; necessarily importeth some degree of approbation of *moral evil itself*, in the divine mind. For if God doth not, in some degree, approve of sin; why doth he put forth any act of his own divine, resistless power, *with an express purpose and design* to the existence and taking place of such an effect?

ANS. In order to invalidate effectually the objection before us, several things must be particularly considered. And I would observe,

1. That for God to put forth some positive exertion of his own divine power, which he designed should be productive of the existence of moral evil, by no means necessarily implieth any degree of approbation of sin, or the least reconcilableness of mind to the evil nature of it. There is nothing absurd and inconsistent, as hath been before observed, in supposing that the same object, or event, should be approved of and considered

as being desirable *in one view of it* ; and, at the same time, considered as being undesirable, and be greatly disapproved of, *in another*. Instances of this kind are not uncommon, among men. How often do we, with pleasure and cheerfulness, submit to pain and sufferings with a view to the attainment of some greater good, and the possession of higher degrees of felicity ? And yet any one would be thought to reason in a manner very inconclusive and precipitant, who should go about to prove, by instances of this kind, that human nature is enamoured of misery, and that mankind are lovers of pain and suffering. And yet this conduct of mankind affordeth as much reason for concluding that *human nature* is reconciled to misery, as a positive divine disposal in favour of the existence of moral evil, doth, for concluding that the *divine nature* is reconciled to sin. If it is conceivable that human nature should *choose suffering and pain*, consistently with a perfect aversion and abhorrence of all suffering ; it is equally conceivable that the divine Being may *choose and prefer* the existence of *moral evil*, consistently with his utter aversion and perfect abhorrence of all sin.

OBJ. The cases are far from being similar and parallel ; and there is no pretext for reasoning from the one to the other. For *man* is but a weak, helpless and dependent creature, having a great degree of imperfection necessarily cleaving to him ; and, therefore, may be *necessitated* to seek the highest felicity of *his* nature, through perils, suffering and danger. But this is infinitely far from being the case with the supreme Being ; who is possessed of *infinite sufficiency and fulness*, and needeth no such *disagreeable means* of attaining *his* own highest felicity and enjoyment.

ANS. Whatever fulness and sufficiency there may be in God—as, doubtless, they are absolutely infinite and boundless ; his dealings are, yet, with creatures who are *imperfect* ; and the manifestations and communications which he is making of himself, are to creatures who are extremely dull of receiving and apprehending ;

prehending ; and who can discern the character of the Deity, and receive the knowledge of it, only through certain means adapted to their infirmity, weakness and imperfection. And, consequently, God himself, whatever is his own inherent sufficiency and fulness, if he will treat with such as *moral beings*, and *make himself known to them*, is *necessitated* (not by a *natural necessity*, out of himself, to which even the *first cause*, the *self-existent and omnipotent Being*, is not subject ; but by a necessity of fitness—of reason and suitableness) to accommodate himself to *their weakness and imperfection* ; and make use of such *means* of instruction and communication, as are best adapted to convey the knowledge of himself to creatures of *their imperfect views and dull apprehension*. This consideration may make it equally *necessary* (though not with the *very same kind of necessity*) for the Deity to make use of certain *means and instruments* for the accomplishment of his ends, which are *in their nature and for their own sakes* disagreeable to him ; as for men to submit to things which are disagreeable and painful to them, in order to *their highest felicity* :—it being carefully kept in memory, however, that the *use* of these means is far from being, *in the same sense*, painful and disagreeable to the Deity, as actual pain and sufferings are disagreeable to creatures. It is, therefore, as supposable that the Deity should, by some positive exertions of his own, either mediately or immediately, bring moral evil into existence, consistently with his infinite hatred of moral evil, and the aversion of his own holy and pure nature, to the nature of all sin ; as it is supposable that mankind, who love happiness and hate misery, should yet, *with pleasure and cheerfulness*, submit to *pain and sufferings*—it being essential to their very natures perfectly to hate and abhor misery and pain.

2. God assureth us, by the prophet Ezekiel, that he hath *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked—the death* of him that dieth ; but that the wicked turn and live.

And,

* Chap. xviii. 23, 32. and xxxiii. 11.

And, by his Apostle, that he would have *all men* to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* And yet nothing is more evident than that there is a *positive agency* of God—*positive exertions of divine power*—in and for the eternal death and utter destruction of sinners : therefore *positive exertions of his own divine and almighty power, for the production of an event in which He, himself, assureth us that he hath no pleasure.* And if the Deity may put forth his own divine power, for the production of *one event* in which he hath no pleasure ; why may he not, also, for *another* ? If he, by his own resistless and almighty power, actually produceth the eternal destruction of a sinner, without having *any pleasure* in it, why is it not quite as supposable, and every way as agreeable to common sense, that he should, *by his own agency and power*, produce the existence of moral evil, and *effect this event*, without the least degree of *pleasedness of mind* with it, or reconcilableness to the nature of it ? It is as contrary to the nature of God to take pleasure in the *misery* of his creatures, as in their *sins*. Yet he *effects* the former event, while Himself assureth us that he hath *no pleasure* in it : Why, then, may he not, also, the latter ; without our *charging* him with taking pleasure in it ?

So, also, there is as little apparent harmony between that *will* of the Deity, whereby he would have *all men* be saved, and many of the exertions of his *positive agency and power* ; as there is, between *that will* of his whereby he really hateth sin with an infinite hatred, and *those positive exertions of power* whereby he, either mediately or immediately, bringeth moral evil into existence. And yet the harmony of *will*, with the operation of *power* in the *former case*, no one will presume to call in question : *as unquestionable* is the harmony of *will*, with the exertions of *power*, in the latter.

The substance of the objection under consideration
is

* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

is really this, viz. That it is inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God to put forth an act of *power*, which shall, either mediately or immediately, be productive of an effect that hath something *in its nature* really repugnant to the nature of holiness.

But will the objector abide by the opinion, that it is inconsistent with the nature, the purity and holiness of God, to exert an act of his own almighty and resistless power, which shall, either mediately or immediately, be productive of an effect containing something in its nature repugnant to the nature of holiness? It is evident in fact that those exertions of divine power, which gave birth to creation, were, at least, the primary and mediate cause of the existence of moral evil. And no friend even to natural religion will deny that God had a perfect foresight and knowledge of this event, as a *certain consequence* of the exercise of that almighty power, which he actually put forth in producing creation.

Farthermore :—The Deity is constantly putting forth acts of that same almighty power which caused creation, in producing effects which, in their nature, are repugnant to the nature of holiness : I mean, in the *preservation* of sinners. If sinners are dependent on God for the *continuation* of their existence ; the *continuance* of their existence is an effect of the *power* of God. And if the continuation of the existence of a sinner is an effect of some exertions of the power of God ; then the *continuance of sinful existence* is an effect of divine exertion. And if the continuation of sinful existence is an effect of some exertions of divine power ; then, of consequence, *sinful existence itself—moral evil*—is the *effect*, of which some exertions of divine power are the *cause*. If the divine purity and holiness, from something in the very nature of these qualities, must necessarily lay a restraint upon such exertions of divine power, as would necessarily be *productive, originally*, of sinful existence ; the same attributes would, for the same reason, lay a restraint

upon the exertions of divine power, which should have for their effect, *the continuation of the being of a sinner—the preservation of sinful existence*. If it is essential to the harmony of the divine attributes, that the power of God should oppose the *existence* of every event, the internal nature and quality of which is repugnant to *holiness* and opposite to *the nature* of it; it is, of course, as essential to the harmony of the divine attributes, to oppose, in the exertions of his power, the *continuation* of sinful existence, as to oppose its *original creation and production*. For there is as real an opposition to holiness, in the exertions of that power which cause the *preservation of sinful existence* and *the continuation of its being*; as in those exertions of power which have, for their effect, the *original creation and production* of sinful existence: or, rather, there is no opposition, at all, to holiness, in either. If it is essential to the harmony of the divine attributes, that the power of God should oppose the *existence* of sin, as really and in the same sense wherein his pure and holy nature opposeth the nature of sin; it must as necessarily oppose the *continuance* of this existence, as the *beginning* of it. For that which carrieth in it no opposition to the *continuation* of sinful existence, containeth in it, no opposition to the *beginning* of such existence. If, therefore, God may, consistently with his infinite hatred of sin, and without importing the least approbation of it, *preserve sinful nature and being in existence*; he may, likewise, in perfect consistency with his purity and holiness, *produce* sinful nature and being, and *bring it into existence*. But the truth and consistence of the former is witnessed by *fact*, and attested by our *constant and daily* experience: it is, therefore, no valid objection against the truth of *any* doctrine, that it inferreth the reality and certainty of the *latter*.

OBJ. II. To suppose the Deity to exert any active power which is either the mediate or immediate cause of sinful existence, necessarily implieth a preference, in the divine mind, of the existence and taking place of

of such an event : And if the will of God *preferreth* this event ; then, it is *in favour of it* : And if the divine will is *in favour of this event* ; then, it *doth not oppose it*. But it is abundantly manifest that the divine Being is, every where in scripturè represented as having an infinite opposition in his holy and pure nature—his *will*—to sin : therefore, for him to have *a will to cause*, either mediately or immediately, the existence of *something* to which his *whole nature and will* are in perfect opposition ; necessarily implieth *perfect opposition* in the will of God to itself. It must, therefore, of necessity be that God, either doth not hate sin with an infinite hatred ; or, that he never did put forth any act of power to *cause*, either mediately or immediately, the existence of moral evil. But no one will presume to assert the former : therefore, every one must necessarily be obliged to assent to the latter ; which effectually subverteth the opinion under consideration.

Ans. In order effectually to invalidate the objection before us, I would humbly submit to consideration, the few following observations : wherein, if the reader should observe a repetition of some things which have been already advanced on the present argument, I would crave his candour and patience ; offering this as my apology, that the nature of the objection requireth it.

1. There is nothing irrational or inconsistent in supposing *the same will*—the same uniform disposition—to prefer an event *in one view of it*, and perfectly oppose, hate and abhor it, in another. Yea, it would argue inconsistency either to approve or disapprove of the same object, in different and *opposite views* of it, at one and the same time. There cannot be a more pertinent instance to illustrate this observation, than the death and sufferings of Christ. This was an event, in one view of it, very desirable and glorious ; in another, infinitely to be abominated and abhorred. In one view of it, it was an event the most honourable to the divine character of any one that ever yet took place :

in another, the most reproachful to God of any act that was ever perpetrated here in our fallen, rebellious world. *In one view of it*, for a man not heartily to approve of it and rejoice in it, would be a strong and irrefragable argument of his enmity against God; *in another*, for him to fall in with it and approve of it, would be an argument as pregnant and irresistible, of an utter disaffection to him. The same uniform, harmonious disposition, therefore, must, of necessity, approve of this event *in one view of it*; and utterly disapprove of it *in another*. So the *holy* and *sin-hating* God really approveth of this event, *complexly considered*; though it necessarily involved the most horrid and abominable wickedness in it: For this was an event which was brought about according to the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; and was *determined by the divine counsel to be done*.^{*} Now if God before *determined* this fact to be done; if this event came into existence according to his *determinate counsel*; it is abundantly manifest that the Deity may *determine* the existence of an event, consistently with his infinite hatred and abhorrence of it. And if God may *determine*, in his own infinite mind, that an event shall certainly exist, consistently with his utter hatred and aversion of mind to it; he may likewise, unquestionably, put forth positive exertions of his own almighty power, which shall certainly issue, in event, in the existence of moral evil, in perfect consistency and harmony with that will of his whereby he infinitely hateth and abhorreth all sin.

2. In those exertions of the power of God, which issue in the existence of moral evil, the object of the divine volition is far from being the same as the object of his will in his infinite hatred and aversion to sin. And where *the objects* of volition or affection are not the same, but quite diverse from each other; it is essential to the harmony of the disposition with itself, and the uniformity of its exercises, that there should

be

^{*} Acts ii. 20. and iv. 28.

be a proportionable diversity of the volitions and affections themselves. In producing all *effects*, of whatever kind, the *direct, immediate* object of divine volition, is, *the exertions of his own power*: The *mediate and ultimate object of divine volition*, is that end which appeareth, in the issue and event, to be effected and accomplished by means, or through the intervention, of that effect of which the exertions of the power in question are the *cause*. And whenever the Deity *willeth* an exertion of power for the production of any effect; he, doubtless, *willeth* at the same time that event which, *ultimately and in the issue*, appeareth to have been produced and brought into existence through the intervention and means of *that effect* which arose out of the exertions of the power in question *as its cause*. Thus if the Deity exerteth an act of power, either mediately or immediately, to produce the existence of moral evil; the *direct, immediate object* of divine volition, it is evident, in that case, is *the exertions of his own divine and almighty power*: God, directly and immediately, chooseth to put forth such certain, definite acts of power. But the *ultimate object* of the divine volition, in the exertions of the power in question, is the effect which is *ultimately* produced or brought into existence, by means of these exertions of power: and this is the *greater good*. The will of God *nextly and immediately* terminateth upon certain, definite exertions of his power; *ultimately*, upon the *greater good* in this way to be effected.

If these observations are just, I think it most manifestly appeareth, that there is not the least degree of opposition of the divine will, in those exertions of his power which produce, either mediately or immediately, the existence of moral evil, to those exercises of will, in God, whereby he hateth sin with an infinite hatred: yea, so far from it, that there is the most evident agreement and harmony between them. To consider moral evil as a fruit of the *divine disposal*, God may *will* it; and yet, when considered in relation to the

the *human purpose and design in it*, infinitely hate and abhor it. This may be illustrated by the following example. God had threatened that he would send the King of Assyria, whom he styleth the rod of his anger, "against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath (saith he) will I give a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit, *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.*" Isai. x. 5, 6, 7. Here it is evident that the Deity *willed* that destruction and desolation which were made by this proud Assyrian. And it is not less abundantly evident, that he viewed his conduct, in destroying and laying waste the cities of his people, with infinite hatred, abhorrence and contempt: for he saith (ver. 12.) "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." And yet no one, I presume, emboldened by *this instance*, will venture to exhibit a charge of inconsistency against God. Nevertheless, there is all the appearance of inconsistency in this conduct of the Deity, which is urged in the objection under consideration against that divine agency respecting the existence and taking place of moral evil, which is pleaded for in the present argument. And for the Deity to *will* a positive exertion of his own divine and almighty power, which should be the *cause*, either mediately or immediately, of the existence of moral evil, no more implieth any opposition to *that will* of his, whereby he hateth sin with an infinite hatred; than the will whereby he put forth that power, by which he assisted and strengthened this King to destroy and lay waste the cities of *his* people, contained some opposition to *that will* of his, whereby he looked upon this conduct of the proud Assyrian with infinite hatred and abhorrence.

It is by no means inconsistent, to suppose that the Deity

Deity may *will* an object, *on one account*, which he hateth and abhorreth, *on another* : this would argue no opposition of will to itself, or inconsistency in the Deity. It doth not appear in any degree inconsistent with the divine hatred of sin, to suppose that God should will the existence of it, on account of something entirely the reverse of that for which he hateth and abhorreth it : or, that he should choose the existence of such an event, for a reason exceeding diverse from that, for which he is utterly and infinitely averse to it. *Whatever other objections* may be of weight against God's actually *willing the existence* of moral evil ; yet, that it argueth inconsistency with *that will* of his whereby he hateth sin with an infinite hatred, and opposition to it, can be of none ; if it is possible that the existence of such an event should be chosen *on one account*, and abhorred *on another*. And that it is possible that the existence of such an event should be chosen *on one account*, and be abhorred and abominated *on another*, appeareth evident from instances which have already been adduced ; particularly that of the death of Christ. The least attention will convince any one, that this was an event *in some respects* exceedingly desirable ; *in others*, to be utterly detested and abhorred.

It hath also been already observed, that sinful existence is the only possible medium through which *creatures* can have that full and clear discernment and discovery of the purity, righteousness and justice of God, which are exhibited in the eternal destruction of the sinner. And as these perfections, in the Deity, are desirable in themselves and in their own nature ; so they are in all the appearances and exhibitions of them : and, consequently, it is desirable that the most full and perfect discovery that can be, should be made of them *to the views of creatures*. And if so, then sinful existence, *considered as a necessary medium of this discovery*, is desirable. And if it is the only possible medium through which this full and perfect discovery could be made to the views of creatures ; then, con-

sidered

sidered merely under this predicament, *creatures* might desire the existence of such an event, consistently with their utter abhorrence of *the nature* of it. And if sinful existence is the only possible medium through which *creatures* can receive this most perfect and full discovery ; then, of consequence, it is the only possible medium through which the Deity *can make* this discovery *to creatures*. For it argueth no defect of power in the Deity, to say that he *cannot* make a discovery *to the views of creatures*, in a way wherein it is *impossible* for them to receive it. And if sinful existence is a *necessary medium* to so desirable an end ; for the Deity to will and desire it *on this account and in this view of it*, argueth no inconsistency with *that will* of his whereby he abhorreth and detesteth it ; nor, opposition to it.

That, on account of which sin is hateful and undesirable, is *its tendency*, and the opposition of it to God. All sin actively opposeth, and in effect denieth, the sovereignty and supremacy of God. All sin, in exact proportion to the degree of its sinfulness, opposeth God ; and opposeth that object and end, which were chiefly and ultimately in the view of the divine mind, in exerting his almighty power in the production of the created system. There is no sin in any thing, which hath in it no positive opposition to God, nor any degree of active tendency to an end diverse from that which engaged the divine mind, when he put forth his almighty, irresistible power, in producing the creation. On account of this tendency and opposition, sin is infinitely to be detested and abhorred. But however evil and detestable sin may be, on account of this opposition and tendency ; it may, nevertheless, be excellently adapted as a *medium* through which a discovery may be made, to creatures, of the infinite aversion and hatred there is in the divine mind to that very tendency in sin which constituteth the infinitely evil *nature* of it. And yet *because it may be a means* of a more perfect and full discovery *to creatures*, of the infinite opposition of the divine mind to *the nature and tendency* of
of

of it ; no one can infer from thence, with the least appearance of reason, that there is, in fact, no opposition of tendency, in sin, to the glory and supremacy of God. And if there is no inconsistency in supposing that sin may be the occasion and means of discovering something which hath, in it, *perfect opposition to the nature of sin* ; there is, of course, no inconsistency of that *will* of God, which is manifested and necessarily implied in those exertions of power, which are, either mediately or immediately, the *cause* of the existence of moral evil ; to that revealed will of his, whereby the Deity looketh on all sin with infinite hatred and abhorrence : which consideration, I think, is a sufficient answer to the objection in question.

Thus have I considered, I apprehend, the principal and most weighty, as well as most plausible, objections which can be made against the doctrine of a *special, positive divine agency and disposal* in favour of the existence of *moral evil*. Whether the objections have been fairly and justly stated, and allowed their due weight, the candid, intelligent reader must judge. The objections which have been considered in the present section, both centre in nearly one and the same thing : but I thought it best to put them into these different forms, the rather that they might appear in their full strength ; and, also, that opportunity might be had for a more full and perfect confutation of them. Whether what hath been said is *any confutation at all* of the principal objections against a *special divine agency and disposal* in favour of the existence of *moral evil*, and giving *infallible futurity and certainty* to the taking place of *sin*, I shall now leave to the judgment and consideration of others ; and proceed to take the sense of the *holy scriptures* on the important point before us.

S E C T. V.

Containing some scripture evidence of a special divine agency and disposal, giving infallible certainty to the existence of moral evil.

WHAT hath been already said upon the subject, very manifestly sheweth the extravagancy and absurdity of the supposition, that the taking place and coming into existence of moral evil, was a thing out of the divine view, and altogether beside the purpose and intention of God. And the holy scriptures are so far from representing it as being contrary to the real purpose of God, that there should ever be any such event, that they plainly teach us the preordination of it, in the divine design; manifestly leading us to consider the present system, *as it is in all and every of its parts*, as the fruit of wise purpose and design. There are many things in the holy scriptures, which make it abundantly evident, not only that God *foresaw* the existence of such an event; but that he also *foreordained and predetermined* it: And, that the taking place of sin was an event which so fully entered into the divine design, and was so essential a part of it; that, without it, the great and principal end of creation itself could not be accomplished. Who can read over the word of God, and take into view, and carefully consider, the great and marvellous work of redemption as there exhibited, in its glory and importance; without being seriously of opinion, that it was the real purpose of God, that moral evil should come into the world? When we consider the importance of the mediatorial character, in the system; and how much it lieth at bottom of all the divine works; and remember how much the kingdom of redemption is represented as the grand end ultimately in view, in creation; it must, at least, be very difficult for us to frame the apprehension,

sion, in our own minds, that God had no positive purposes respecting the existence and taking place of sin. And to suppose that moral evil came into the world in *opposition* to a *positive purpose* of the divine mind respecting its existence, a little attention will convince any one, is attended with consequences at least as embarrassing and perplexing, as the supposition of a positive divine agency and disposal in favour of the existence of such an event.

Can any one read over (for instance) the history of the family of Jacob until their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage under the hand of Moses, without having it strongly impressed upon his mind and understanding, that, for wise reasons, those shocking pieces of cruelty, barbarity and wickedness, which distinguish that particular period, were *predetermined and fore-ordained* of God. Respecting that unnatural piece of conduct of the sons of Jacob, in selling their brother Joseph, the good man himself directeth their view (under the confusion into which his discovery of himself to them, in Egypt, had flung them) to the hand, and wise disposal and agency, of God, in the whole affair. Thus he saith, Gen. xlv. 5. *Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you, to preserve life.* And ver. 8. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.* Upon this representation of the matter, by Joseph, to his brethren, we may remark the few following things :

1. That a positive efficiency and disposal, in this affair, is manifestly ascribed to God. There is no intimation of any way, whereby God sent Joseph into Egypt, otherwise than by positively disposing things, in his providence, in that very way and manner in which they actually came to pass. And such a positive disposal in favour of that event, is a disposal of all that series of events, in all their variety of circumstances and connexions, through means of which that great event, which was the issue of all, finally took place,

place. And this is, certainly, a positive divine agency and disposal, which had for its object, either mediately or immediately, the existence of moral evil.

2. The person who made these observations and reflections, and who ascribed so much to the divine agency in that remarkable scene and series of events, was, himself, a man of eminent piety and godliness. The history of his life furnisheth us with sufficient testimonials of his integrity and uprightness of heart. He shewed that he feared God—that he made the Lord his confidence and trust, under the uncommon trials and temptations which he was called to encounter, in the strange land. Therefore,

3. When Joseph's brethren were struck with a sense of their barbarity and wickedness in the treatment they had given him, we cannot suppose that, in order to assuage the grief, and mitigate the pain, of such a conviction, this *good man* had the least thought of directing their view to the hand of God in the affair, in such a sense and manner as should, in the least degree, obscure *their* wickedness, or lessen the criminality of it in their own eyes. This would be to take the blame of that wicked conduct off from them, and fix it upon God: a conduct of which we cannot reasonably suppose one of Joseph's character would be guilty.

4. What Joseph, therefore, had in view, was, not to abate their convictions, or diminish the sense which they had of their own wickedness; but, to bring the divine hand into view, and the real and great good which God had taken occasion, through means of their wickedness, to effect. This is the only method whereby relief can be administered to the penitent heart, pained and burdened with a sense of its wickedness. Nothing but a conviction of the divine agency and disposal bounding, circumscribing and ascertaining every event, of whatever nature and kind, and directing all things, in the wisest manner, through the best adapted means, to the most happy and glorious issue, can entirely relieve the real pain, anxiety and distress of a proper and genuine conviction of sin.

5. If

5. If Joseph conducted wisely and prudently in this matter, it appeareth that the most proper and suitable method to relieve the broken, penitent and benevolent heart, of that anxiety and distress which must necessarily be occasioned by an effectual, proper conviction of sin, and a prospect of the extensive reign of wickedness here in our world, is, to bring the divine hand and agency particularly into view, and represent *every event, of whatever nature or kind*, as coming into existence as a fruit of the divine disposal, and under the direction and influence of his infinite and unerring wisdom. The expressions here used, are such as most manifestly lead us to consider the wicked conduct of the brethren of Joseph as *the effect* of which some positive divine disposal and agency were *the cause*. He saith expressly, *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God*. It is true, that the ends of divine providence, and the views of Joseph's brethren; in one and the same series of events, were exceedingly the reverse of each other. As he saith (Gen. 1. 20.) *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good*. God's view in *disposing*, and their view in *acting*, one and the same thing, were infinitely different from each other. But yet the positive disposal and efficiency of God, issued in an event which was great wickedness in the actors of it.

The divine agency and disposal, *as cause* of the existence of moral evil *as its effect*, are spoken of in terms still more strong and expressive, relative to the conduct and wickedness of Pharaoh, the proud oppressor of the people of God. When God first sent Moses unto Pharaoh, to demand liberty for the people of Israel to go three days journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice to JEHOVAH, he at the same time foretells the utter refusal of this haughty tyrant; and saith expressly, (Exod. vii. 3.) *I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt*. Accordingly it is said, (ver. 13.) *And he HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART, that he hearkened not unto them*.

them. The same form of expression is used respecting the same matter (Exod. ix. 12.) *And THE LORD HARDENED THE HEART OF PHARAOH; and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord spake by Moses.* And when God foretelleth the farther plagues and still sorer judgments which he had prepared for Pharaoh, and was bringing upon him, he saith (ver. 16.) *And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.* It is difficult to find terms more strongly and emphatically to express a positive design and purpose, in the Deity, in favour of the existence of moral evil, and a divine agency and disposal giving infallible futurity and certainty to the existence and taking place of a scene of wickedness most provoking to the holy God, and abominable and hateful in his eyes. He not only foretold the wickedness of Pharaoh as what *might* come to pass, but as what should *infallibly* come to pass. Nor doth he represent barely his design *to suffer and permit it*; but, also, his positive purpose of *actually effecting, by some positive agency and disposal of his own, this hardness in Pharaoh's heart.*

To say that God only *permitted* Pharaoh to harden his own heart, or, at most, no more than laid the *temptation* before him, by no means cometh up to the idea conveyed by the *positive, express* declarations of the text: or, if it did, still it would not in any measure relieve the difficulty, for the removal of which these softening, lenient, timid expressions were invented. For,

1. If the divine Being had been as averse to the taking place of Pharaoh's wickedness, as his holy and pure nature is to the nature of sin; he could with infinite ease, have delivered and led forth the tribes of his people, without the leave of this haughty tyrant, or his being ever at all consulted in the case.

2. If the Deity was really as averse to the event of the sin and wickedness of Pharaoh, as his nature is averse

verse to the *nature* of sin ; he would surely never have *permitted* it, when his people might as well have been delivered, had he so seen fit, without such a temptation ever having been laid before Pharaoh to transgress in a manner so bold and daring. And, least of all, on this supposition, would he have laid *special occasions and temptation* to sin, before one so peculiarly apt and fitted to be drawn into the snare, as Pharaoh was ; but would have been particularly careful not to have administered any occasion, in his providence, for increasing the obstinacy and rebellion of so hardened a sinner.* Whereas,

3. The whole affair, as recorded by Moses, carrieth in it the most manifest marks of design. Every circumstance hath this appearance ; and all carry the face of a previous purpose, and positive intention, of the righteous Governor of the world, that, for some wise reasons, all this horrid scene of wickedness should actually come to pass. Moses, doubtless, had an equal concern for the honour and glory of the divine character, with those who imagine it so reproachful to the Deity to consider the taking place of moral evil as a *fruit and effect* of a positive divine agency and disposal. And if he had once thought that the divine character would have been endangered, by representing the wickedness

* If we suppose *that* will of the Deity, with which the existence of those events which are its objects is connected, and the exertions of which give *being* to any event, to be the same as his *preceptive will* to his creatures ; it is as really dishonourable and reproachful to God, to say that he *permitteth* sin, as to say that, by some *positive agency and disposal*, He, either mediately or immediately, causeth the existence of it. For it is as truly and infinitely contrary to the *preceptive will* of God, to *permit* sin, as actually to *command* and *enjoin* it. But if the *creative* and *preceptive* will of God are *not the same*, we have no occasion for the gentle (and, I may say, in this place insignificant) term *permit*, in order to relieve our imaginations ; it implying no inconsistency to suppose that God, either mediately or immediately, by some exertions of his own almighty power, gave certainty to the existence of moral evil. But be this as it will, the term *permit*, in this use and application of it, carrieth, every way, as real a reflection upon the moral character of God, as the terms *positive agency and disposal* : the former implying some degree of that same reconcilableness of the divine mind to moral evil, which is apprehended to be implied in the latter. It is a term, therefore, in my humble opinion, which hath been improperly used ; tending to relieve only the *imaginations* of men ; and *that* by begetting in the mind an apprehension of certain powers, in creatures, which do not belong to them ; and, of a certain *neglect in providence*, and *carelessness* in the divine mind, which are infinitely reproachful to him.

wickedness and obstinacy of Pharaoh as the *effect*, of which a positive divine agency and disposal were, either mediately or immediately, the *cause*; surely he would have expressed himself in a manner more cautious and guarded, on so delicate a subject; and not suffered his relation, as it unquestionably doth, to carry in it such visible marks of a positive divine purpose and design giving birth to a series of the most bold and daring wickedness. Moses could not have made use of terms more strong and expressive, if he had actually designed to represent a positive divine agency and disposal as giving previous infallible certainty to any scene or series of events. And if all these expressions are to be so analyzed and subtilized, and perfectly interpreted away, as to convey no idea of its being more agreeable to the divine purpose and intention that this scene of wickedness should take place, than the *nature and evil* of sin are to the *holy and pure nature* of God; we must forever despair of determining any doctrine whatsoever by the word of God; nor ever presume to receive the most plain, familiar and express assertions of it, as a sufficient authority for *any* opinion.

The design of God in raising up Pharaoh, as expressed in Exod. ix. 16. the Apostle Paul adduceth in proof of the doctrine, that *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*; and quotes this very text in support of it (Rom. ix. 17.) from whence he draweth this conclusion (ver. 18.) *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*. Paul himself was not insensible of the objection which, at this distance of time, is made against a doctrine so unpopular as that of the absolute sovereignty of God, in the salvation and damnation of sinners. Accordingly he stateth the objection, in the next words, in the same manner, and nearly under the same form, in which it is urged at the present day, against the same doctrine. He saith, *Thou wilt say then, why doth he yet find fault?*
For

For who hath resisted his will?—As much as to say,
 “ If God, himself, hath hardened the heart of any one ;
 “ it is just as he made it, and, therefore, just as he
 “ would have it be : and if it is just as God *would*
 “ *have it be*, what pretence can there be that *his will is*
 “ *resisted?* And how can there be any criminality or
 “ offence, where there is no resistance to the divine
 “ will ?” Here are the only two objections, of any
 considerable degree of plausibility or weight, which
 any one can make against a positive divine agency and
 disposal giving certain futurity to the existence of
 moral evil. The *first* is, that, on this supposition,
 God hath no reason to find fault : the *second*, that there
 is no evil or criminality in sin. In order to remove
 these objections, and take off their force, Paul bringeth
 into view the absolute supremacy and sovereignty of
 God ; and the unreasonableness of the *creature's* ob-
 jecting against the *Creator*, for any of his acts in mak-
 ing the creature such as he really is. He saith (ver.
 21.) *Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same*
lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto
dishonour? Before the vessel is formed, there is nothing
 in the *lump* to determine one part unto dishonour,
 more than another ; or the contrary : which sheweth
 that this similitude was not made use of, in order to
 represent the right which God hath, *after he has actu-*
ally formed the whole race of men in sin, to save, and to
 cast off, according to his sovereign, wise and arbitrary
 will. For mankind, being in sin, were *already formed*
to be vessels unto dishonour, i. e. deserving of wrath :
 consequently the sovereignty of God, in ordaining
 who of *sinful men* shall finally perish, is not, with any
 propriety, represented by the sovereignty of the potter
 in forming different vessels out of one and the same
 lump. It must, therefore, be the evident purpose and
 design of the Apostle, to represent, and teach us, that
 our being *originally* either *holy* or *sinful*, is not the
 fruit and effect of our own free will and choice ; but
 that our first or original, either *holy* or *sinful*, exer-
 cises,

cises, are originated wholly by some foreign, extrinsic *cause*, and come into being *as its effect*. Vessels made by the potter are, either unto honour, or unto dishonour, merely and solely for being *what they are, and such as they are*; without any reference whatever being had to the design, purpose or skill of the potter. Just so of mankind; they are either to honour, or to dishonour, i. e. holy or sinful, without any consideration at all of the *cause* of their virtue or vice, whether it is internal or external; in the Deity, or in themselves. And *in this sense* had God the same right to form one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour, as the potter hath over the clay: And *this* is but the natural consequence, of what the scripture saith concerning Pharaoh, just quoted by the Apostle: **EVEN FOR THIS SAME PURPOSE HAVE I RAISED THEE UP, &c.***

Thus is the Apostle Paul as full in the doctrine of a positive divine efficiency and disposal, giving certain futurity to the existence of moral evil, as language can well express: asserting that God *hardeneth* whom he will; and, in proof of it, quoting the express words of God himself to Pharaoh, wherein he signifieth to that cruel and obstinate tyrant, that how great soever his opposition might be to the God of Israel, he was not able to frustrate and disappoint his designs and counsels: for it was he, himself (the very God whom Pharaoh opposed) that raised him up, of express purpose and design, *such a creature as he was*, in order to lay the foundation of opening, to the best advantage, those wonderful and marvellous scenes which were exhibited in the land of Egypt, in the delivery of his chosen people, and the destruction of their enemies.

However

* It cannot with any propriety be urged, that it is *unjust* in God to bring moral beings into existence in sin. *Justice* or *injustice* are exercised only in *estimating* moral characters, and the consequent *treatment* of the subjects of them. No *injustice* can be done, by the Deity, to any *creature*, where his character is not improperly estimated. When a being *possesseth* a moral character, and not before, he is susceptible of *injustice* on account of it. But that exercise of the will, or power, of God, which hath for its object the existence of a moral being, either sinful, or holy, contains in it no *estimation* whatever of his character; and, in the nature of things, can do him, neither *justice* nor the *contrary*.

However disgusting and unpopular this reasoning of the Apostle may be in our day, the happy time, we hope, will come, when these scriptures, as well as others, shall be understood in their true simplicity, perspicuity and beauty ; and the Spirit of God be so plentifully poured out, that the passions and corruptions of men shall not be irritated by plain, evangelical truth !

There are various representations in scripture, the plain and most natural construction of which clearly convey the idea of some special divine efficiency and disposal, *as cause*, of the existence and taking place of moral evil, *as its effect*. We have an instance of this kind, which is very clear and illustrating, in the case of the king of Assyria. God calleth him *the rod of his anger* ; and saith, that *the staff in his hand*, i. e. the power by which this proud monarch smote and destroyed the nations, was God's own indignation. And God saith, that he will *send him against an hypocritical nation* ; meaning the Jews ; and that *he will give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread down like the mire of the streets*. Then God mentioneth, by the Prophet, the great and exceedingly wide difference there was in the views of this haughty and aspiring prince, from *his own* wise and righteous purposes in the same event and work. The Assyrian monarch would arrogate all the glory of his conquest to himself, and attribute it to the power of his own arm : whereas he was no more than a rod, in the hand of the wise and righteous Governor of the world, for correcting and chastising the people of Israel. Therefore God saith, that, *when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks*. But however effectual the appointment and disposal of God might be, in the case ; this, by no means, excused the *proud Assyrian* from the wickedness of which he was guilty in accomplishing the purposes and decrees of God. Accord-

ingly we find that the Lord expostulates with him upon the exceeding unreasonableness of his proud and arrogant boasting, in the following manner. *Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up; or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood.* See the whole account in *Isai. Chap. x.*

From this representation of the matter it is abundantly evident, that the very actions and conduct of this aspiring prince, which were so exceedingly provoking to God, and for which he was resolved to punish him, were, nevertheless, most absolutely and infallibly predetermined by the all-wise God. The designs of the Deity, in raising up one of such a character, and the views of this wicked monarch in what he did in execution of the divine purposes and counsels, were infinitely diverse from each other: so that, although *the thing was done* which God, in his counsel and by an efficient determination and unfrustrable decree, had ordained should come to pass; yet man sinned, and exceedingly provoked the Lord in doing it. And it is, indeed, very manifest, that the wise and benevolent purposes and designs of the Deity, in his kingdom and government, cannot be carried on and perfected, without the existence and taking place of moral evil. And yet sin is not the less odious and hateful, because of its subserviency to the divine purposes and designs; any more than the over-ruling hand of Divine Providence, in making the action of a man, which he designed as an injury to his neighbour, the means of some great and particular good to him, maketh that action less odious and criminal.

Farthermore: It is exceedingly manifest, that the greatest piece of wickedness which hath been perpetrated here in our world, took place in event in consequence of the divine counsel, and a special determination of the Deity giving infallible certainty and futurity to the event: I mean, the crucifixion of our
blessed

blest Lord. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any one, who is not greatly prejudiced and strongly prepossessed in favour of some *particular, darling* sentiment, to read over the history, given in the holy scriptures, of this most horrid fact, without conceiving an idea of some positive divine determination giving absolute certainty and futurity to this event. Thus is it said (Acts ii. 23.) *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.* Here it is represented that our Lord was delivered up, not only by the foreknowledge, but by the *determinate counsel of God*—a counsel which gave infallible certainty to the event. Accordingly we find our Lord himself saying, (Luke xxii. 22.) *And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined.* To the same purpose is it said, (Acts iv. 27, 28.) *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both HEROD and PONTIUS PILATE with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel before determined to be done.* And in Acts iii. 17, 18. the crucifixion of Christ is represented as being an accomplishment of the purposes of God, and a fulfilment of the designs of his providence. For Peter, addressing himself to the murderers of Christ, saith, *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers : but those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled.*

How such a determination and agency as these words do most infallibly imply, can, with the least propriety, be applied to God, *in such a case as this*, if he hath the same aversion to the taking place of any sin, as he hath to the *evil nature and quality* of sin, is quite inconceivable and incomprehensible. And were it, in fact, the case, that the aversion of the divine mind to the coming into existence of such an event, and his aversion of nature to the nature of sin, were
one

one and the same ; we cannot see why Peter was not guilty of the most horrid blasphemy, in using language as he did ; and, in most manifestly ascribing such a purpose and determination to God, as is plainly inconsistent with the purity of God, and the aversion of his holy and pure nature to the nature of sin. But if the aversion of the divine mind and will to the existence and taking place of moral evil, and the aversion of his holy and pure nature to the nature of sin, are not of equal extent, and one and the same ; the whole controversy is at an end, and the grand difficulty removed, which was in the way of admitting the supposition of such a positive divine agency, efficiency and disposal, as gives infallible certainty and futurity to the existence of moral evil.

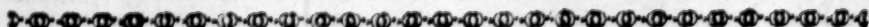
If the terms and phrases made use of in the holy scriptures, and which have been referred to, in the present argument, do not imply some *positive determination* of the divine mind in favour of the existence of such events as he, nevertheless, chargeth upon men as the highest wickedness ; I see not how it is in the power of language to do it. And if they can be so explained as to consist with an equal aversion of the divine mind and will to the existence of such events, as there is in the *divine nature* to the *nature of moral evil* ; it will be to no purpose to pretend to fix any precise meaning to terms, or ever endeavour to determine any point by reasoning and argumentation. If such like expressions as *God's hardening the hearts of men*, repeated over and over, and that with an express declaration that God purposely and with this very design raised up men of hard hearts, that he might shew in them his power, and cause his name to be declared through the earth ; and these very texts and expressions quoted and improved by an *inspired writer*, in establishing the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, hardening ; I say, if such terms and expressions as these, reiterated and used with particular emphasis,

emphasis, as terms of great importance in an argument upon some of the fundamental doctrines of revelation, can yet be so analyzed and explained, as to leave, in the minds of men, no apprehension that the sovereign God and righteous Governor of the world is any more or otherwise reconciled to the existence of moral evil, and its coming into the system, than his holy and pure nature is to the nature of sin; it will be forever in vain to attempt to decide any controversy whatever by the word of God; and it will be utterly unsafe for any man to lay much weight upon it. But if the Deity hath not been, from eternity, as utterly and infinitely averse, in his whole mind and will, to the existence of such an event, as his *moral nature* is, to the *moral quality* of it; the consequence plainly is that when he expresseth his hatred of sin, to his creatures, in his prohibitions of it, he doth not mean to express to them, in these prohibitions, the infinite dissatisfaction which the taking place of such an event in his system hath given him; or the irreconcilable aversion he eternally had to the *being* and *existence* of such an event.

That it was the *positive design and purpose* of God, that moral evil should come into existence in his system, and even rise to that astonishing height to which it hath risen here in our world, what can be more evident from the word of God? Or how is it in the power of language to express a positive divine purpose in favour of the existence of such an event, more fully than it is done in the word of God?

We see, moreover, that the whole work and fabric of redemption, in its infinite beauty and vast extent, most evidently depended, for its accomplishment, upon the taking place of moral evil. And that the Deity should concert so marvellous and extensive a plan of operation—a plan wherein the transcendent fulness, sufficiency and glory of his own holy and pure nature, were to appear in a brighter light, and shine forth with a more glorious splendour than in all his
other

other ways and works ; I say, that the Deity should concert such a plan of operation, before even the foundation of the world (as it is abundantly evident that he did) and yet entertain no positive purpose that moral evil should ever come into existence, is what appeareth to me quite inconceivable and incomprehensible. We have the most obvious reasons, therefore, for concluding that there was, from eternity, a positive purpose, in the divine mind, that moral evil should come into existence.



CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

UPON the whole, I am humbly of opinion, that the scheme of doctrine which implieth an infallible connexion in things, and an absolute previous certainty of all events, as well in the moral as in the natural world, standeth upon a firm and sure basis ; and that, notwithstanding the many hard and reproachful names with which it is loaded, and which at the present day are so liberally thrown out against it, it is capable of a just, solid and rational defence.

There is nothing in these doctrines, as hath been shown in the preceding sections, tending in any degree to lessen our apprehensions of the exceeding evil, turpitude and hatefulness of sin ; or, furnishing the sinner with any just pretext and excuse for his sin. There is nothing in these sentiments inconsistent with the ideas of desert either of praise or blame ; or that precludeth the use of means and the endeavours of men, and rendereth useless that wisdom, prudence, sagacity and foresight, with which the Author of our beings hath endowed us. And there is nothing in this scheme of doctrine, I may farther add, that appeareth to reflect any reproach upon the most high God, or that implieth in it any thing inconsistent with his spotless purity and holiness, rendering any of his dispensations dark, mysterious and unintelligible. On the other hand, I think it abundantly evident that the scheme of sentiments, contained in the preceding pages, hath a very manifest and apparent tendency to raise and exalt our ideas of

the wisdom, goodness, sovereignty and supremacy of God; to convince us of the infinite extent, wisdom and excellency of his government; and are excellently fitted, in their nature, to form our minds to an entire confidence in God, the great Governor of the world, a quiet submission to his will, and cheerful acquiescence in *his* disposals, however otherwise dark and mysterious they may appear to the narrow and extremely imperfect views of men. No other scheme of doctrine, as to me it appeareth, can ever reconcile the present system as it is in all its parts, together with that scene of events which is actually furnished out to view, with perfect, consummate wisdom and skill, and infinite sufficiency and absolute supremacy. Upon any other scheme of doctrine, it must be a thing *upon the whole* greatly to be lamented, bewailed and deplored, that any such thing as moral evil ever made its appearance in the intelligent system; affording a view and prospect of things that cannot fail of giving pain and distress to every pious and benevolent heart: and which, consequently, must more nearly and sensibly affect the *divine mind*; filling it with deeper sorrow, and infinitely more painful and pungent regret. A God subject to such passions and feelings as these cannot be JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; but a mere creature of the imaginations of men, infinitely beneath him. On the other hand, such is the extent of the divine wisdom and power, and such is the absolute supremacy of God, that nothing can be more irrational and inconsistent, than to suppose that any one of that almost infinite variety of events which ever hath or will have taken place, doth yet come to pass without the knowledge of God, or otherwise than under the direction of his all-powerful providence: or, in such a sense contrary to his will, as to give him the least kind of uneasiness and pain; or, so that *upon the whole* it would really have been more pleasing to him that such an event never should have come into existence; or, that it should have been, in any sense or degree, different

different from what it actually is. And to admit the contrary supposition implieth many things, in it, as inconsistent with all our ideas of God, and as reproachful to his great name, as it is imagined or supposed are contained in the opinion respecting that divine agency and disposal giving certain futurity to the existence of moral evil, which hath been urged and defended in the foregoing sections.

This view of the matter, also, which hath been exhibited in the preceding pages, tendeth greatly to illustrate and manifest the importance of the *mediatorial character* in the system of God: and to convince us that there could not have been absolute perfection of design, without the existence of such a character. If what hath been said upon this subject may be for the honour of the divine Redeemer, the glory of his character, and a means of promoting his mediatorial purposes and designs; it will be a matter of but very little importance what is said, or thought, of the writer. It hath not been my design to irritate, stigmatize or reproach: but my design hath been to vindicate that scheme of doctrine which, it appeared to me, is most manifestly contained in the *holy scriptures*; and freely and without restraint to expose, as far as I was able, the weakness and sophistry of those reasons and arguments which have been made use of in order to overthrow and subvert it. But whatever may have been my own private views and designs, I am not insensible that I expose myself to censure, by advancing and endeavouring to defend a scheme of doctrine so obnoxious and unpopular as that which is contained in the preceding performance. However, I think I may *justly expect it* of those who, upon perusal of what I have offered on the subject, shall think fit to censure and condemn me, that they provide a clear and pertinent answer to the reasonings by which I have endeavoured to support my opinion. What weight is really to be laid on such like reasonings, and how far they

are conclusive and just ; it is not for me to determine : but, such as they are, they are now cheerfully submitted to public inspection ; and the cause committed to Him who judgeth righteous judgment, and who, in his own time and way, will make his own *glorious truth* to triumph and prevail.



APPENDIX.

AN
APPENDIX

TO THE PRECEDING

ESSAY;

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

Dr. Dana's Examination

OF THE LATE

REV. PRESIDENT EDWARDS'S

Inquiry on Freedom of Will,

CONTINUED.

A P P E N D I X

LIST OF

PLATES



Dr. Dabbs's Examination

THE PRESIDENT NEWARD'S

History of the Election of WILLIAM

A N

APPENDIX, &c.

SOON after the first publication of the preceding "Essay on Moral Agency," the public were presented with Dr. Dana's "Examination of the late Rev. President Edwards's Inquiry on Freedom of Will, Continued." But, as the arguments in favour of that hypothesis respecting human liberty, which the Doctor advocated in his *first* examination, received but little additional support from his *second*; the public would not have been troubled with any remarks upon it, had not a new edition of the Essay been proposed to the Author. Upon this proposal being made, a number of respectable Gentlemen have given it as their opinion, that a few remarks might be made, to advantage, on the "Examination Continued." This will be attempted in the following Appendix.

The Author is not wholly insensible of the evils too commonly attendant on controversial writings. Polemic writers are not without the passions and failings incident to human nature in general. Hence they are exposed to leave *reasoning* for *declamation*; and, sometimes, quit the field of argument, for that of personal invective. It is much to be lamented that writings on the most grave and solemn subjects should ever be sullied by personal reflection. The cause of truth needs no such weapons of defence: nor, doth it ever receive any advantage from them. The love of truth, superior to every personal consideration, is never inimical

imical to the person who, we may apprehend, has deviated from the paths of truth.

Wishing not to depart from the spirit with which a controversy on the important subject before us merits to be handled; the candour and attention of the public are requested, while we submit to the perusal of our readers the following observations on the subjects of *God's decree and agency*, and the *freedom and liberty of men*.

That men are the proper causes of their own acts of will, is an opinion espoused by Dr. Dana. The cause of *moral* volitions, he considers as being in the mind itself which is the subject of them: and, thinks that he has offered sufficient proof "that moral volitions proceed from a cause in moral agents." He asserts, that "moral agents are themselves the efficient causes of their own volitions."* He fully expresses it as his opinion, that "If the cause of the exercises and actions of moral agents be not in themselves, then the Deity is the proper efficient cause of them."§ The Doctor supposeth there can be no *medium* betwixt a power of self-determination in men, and the universal efficiency of God, with respect of human actions. Therefore he feels it to be important to establish the doctrine of a power of self-determination. But, Is this doctrine capable of defence? Will it admit of a rational support? It is very immaterial, in the present case, whether we consider the *agent*, the *man*, the *mind*, or the *will itself*, as the *cause* of internal, voluntary exercises. Whatever be the *cause*, it must be something which is *voluntary* and *active*: otherwise it is immaterial whether the cause be internal, or external. For men to be the *involuntary* causes of their own acts of will, is no privilege—gives them no pre-eminence. If the cause of exercises of will in men be *involuntary*, it is of no importance to determine whether it be internal, or external. If our wills be moved by an *involuntary* cause, it matters not, as to our freedom, whether that
cause

* p. 25, 25, 41, &c.

§ p. 27.

cause be within, or without :—be it which it may, it possesses none of the qualities of a cause—it doth nothing, it produceth no effect. To say that acts of will are the effect of an *involuntary*, is the same as to say that they are the effect of an *inactive*, cause : and, this is as much as to say that they are the effects of no cause at all, i. e. not effects. Accordingly, we find that the Doctor, though he strenuously urges, and endeavours to defend, the doctrine of a power of self-determination in men, does not plead that acts of will in moral agents are not *effects* ; or, that they come into existence without a *cause* : but, that “ moral agents themselves are the *efficient*s of their own volitions—that “ moral volitions proceed from a *cause* in moral agents.”

If moral volitions proceed from a *cause* in the agents themselves, this cause must be *voluntary* ; otherwise it could not *effect* acts of will. And, if it be a *voluntary cause*, it differs not from an *act of the will* : and, therefore, men are to be considered as the *causes* of their own acts of will, *by their own acts of will*—they are the *efficient*s of their acts of will, *by acts of will*. If it be not by an act of will that the agent produceth his own acts of will ; By what act is it ?—How doth he produce them ? What doth a man *do* in order to produce an act of will ? If he *doth* any thing, he exerciseth an act of will : and, therefore, exerciseth an act of will, in order to produce an act of will. This must be the way in which moral agents *effect* their own acts of will. And yet, by the supposition, this act of will is exercised in order to produce the *first* act of will ; and must, therefore, be *antecedent* to it. It is the *cause* of an act of will that we are seeking after. *Cause* is always prior to *its effect*. Whatever is the *cause* of an act of will, must be prior to that act of will which is its *effect*. The *cause* of an act of will in a moral agent, must precede *that act of will* in the agent which is *effected* by it. But, acts of will in moral agents have not been *eternally* successive—the *succeed-*
H h
ing

ing caused by the *preceding* one. We want the cause of the *first* in the *series*. To say that the *first* was caused or effected by an *antecedent* one, is a contradiction in terms. We might, with as much propriety, say that *this first* caused itself: and, therefore, that "volition springs from itself;" which the Doctor says "is a very different thing from saying that the *subject* "is the cause of it."* Let the reader judge whether it be different. If there be a difference, let it be pointed out. To say that the *first* act of will in a moral agent was caused by an act of will of this same moral agent, cannot be materially different from saying that the first act of will sprang from itself. And, if the *first* springs from itself, all the rest may as well. We are sensible that it is a contradiction in terms, to say that volition springs from itself—and, not less contradictory and absurd, to say that the volitions of moral agents spring from a voluntary cause in the agents themselves. But, this lies, and lies as a dead weight, upon the advocates for a power of self-determination: we are not answerable for it.

Would these gentlemen gain any advantage to their cause, by urging that it is not by acts of will, but in some other way, that moral agents *effect* their own volitions? If they would, let them take it, and welcome. If it be not by their own exertions that moral agents effect their acts of will, How is it? Do moral agents *do* any thing without *exertion*? And, have they any exertions besides voluntary ones? Can any thing they do without an act of will. (could there be any such thing) be called *their act*? And, could *this* authorize us to consider them as the *causes* of their own acts of will? To say that men are the *involuntary* causes of their own acts of will, is the same as to say that they are *no causes at all* of them: and, this is to say that they are *not the causes* of their own acts of will.

The doctrine of a power of self-determination, or
of

* p. 42.

of a power in men to produce and effect their own acts of will, is every way embarrassed. In getting rid of one difficulty, we run directly upon another—Difficulties on every side incumber it.

Should we say that men are the *designing* causes of their own acts of will, it would afford no relief. If by *designing* cause, be meant *voluntary*, this would be the same as to say that men are the *designing* causes of their own *designs*—the *voluntary* causes of their own *volitions*. And, every one must see that this is saying nothing ; or, nothing to the case.

When the Doctor offers himself as a professed advocate for a power of self-determination in men ; it was surely incumbent on him to provide some tolerable answer to the objections. He ought to have shown the fallacy of the arguments which are urged as utterly subversive of every idea of such a power. He had these arguments before him, both in Mr. Edwards's Inquiry, and in the " Essay ;" though, as he justly observes, " handled with more appearance of reason" * in the former. The reasonings against the existence and possibility of such a power, if capable of it, merit an answer :—without confuting them, no man ought to imagine he can write successfully in vindication of such a power.

But, we would not proceed too fast ; nor forget that the Doctor progresseth in his argument in favour of the power in question, in his " Examination continued." In the first Section, which is written professedly on the subject of *self-determination*, he urgeth, as a proof of its existence, the power men have to *suspend, deliberate and examine*. It must be supposed that he here means a power in men to *suspend acts of will* : otherwise, How can this be an argument in favour of a power of *self-determination* ? *Suspending* an act of will, is the same as *ceasing to will*. And, if men have not *this* power of suspending, they are, of course, *passive* in the *causes* of their exercises of will ; and, there-

H h 2

fore,

* p. 142.

fore, not *self-determined*—not themselves the *efficient*s of their own acts of will. If men have not a power *not to exercise* any act of will at all, What is this *suspending power*? What assistance do men gain from it in *effecting* their own acts of will? If it be not a power *in this sense to suspend*, it is too late for any advantage to be derived from it in *causing* the act of the will. The act of the will has already gained existence:—it has escaped the vigilance of this suspending power, and gotten quite out of its reach.

But, what is this power men have of suspending acts of will? Is it a power which *without any exercise—without any exertion*, produceth its effect—even the effect of a *total suppression of volition*? This will not be pleaded: this would make the power nothing; and, the thing *effected by it*, nothing—a power which *doth nothing and effects nothing*. Such a power is worth nothing: no one will envy others the possession of it.

If suspending and deliberating are *voluntary*, they give no assistance to the power of self-determination. The Doctor was aware of this objection. His answer is, “That a moral agent either hath power to *originate* an act of suspension, and so bring himself into the view of new motives; or the suspending act proceeds from a motive extant in the mind at the same instant with some motive to immediate election or action.”*

The Doctor here speaks of suspension as *an act*: he must mean *an act of the mind, or will*. This act he supposes to be originated by the agent; or, to proceed from a motive extant in the mind at the same instant with some motive to immediate election or action. Perhaps the terms *election* and *action* are meant to be applied to *certain particular acts of the will* in distinction from *others*—to such as the schoolmen term *imperate* in distinction from *immanent*. When the mind *deliberates* and is in a state of *suspense* with respect to
external

external action, volition, or the immanent acts of the will, are not suspended: If they were, What kind of deliberation could there be in the case? So, when it deliberates with respect to the truth or propriety of any proposition made to it, the will is not in a state of suspension, if the term mean any thing in opposition to motion and action. Suspension and deliberation imply volition, as truly as election and action. Nor is it to be supposed that that act of the will which is implied by the term deliberate, is moved and excited by any motive whatever as its cause. Motives are not causes which by their own action and influence move and excite the will. Reasons both for and against the choice of an object presented to the intellectual view, may exist in the mind and be discerned by it at the same time. In this case men deliberate; but, not without any act of will. And, in this case, there is, on the whole, no motive to immediate election; and the will is not determined to it.

Two things must be taken for granted in the Doctor's argument, in order to give it weight, neither of which are true. The first is, that in *suspension* of election and action there is no motion or exercise of the will: the second is, that motives are causes of the exercises of will. If deliberating and suspending with respect to some future election and action, be itself an act of will; this will no more prove the mind to be self-determined, than any of its future elections and actions. A power of self-determination may as well be inferred from those volitions which are here termed *election* and *action*, as from those in which it *deliberates* and *suspends*. Bestowing different names upon different acts of the will, contributes nothing to the argument in favour of a power of self-determination. And if *motives* have no causal influence to produce acts of will, a variety of them may exist in the intellectual view at the same time that the will is in exercise with respect to other objects. The question before us is not whether volition be *caused by the influence of motives in distinction*

distinction from being *self-determined*: but, whether the *cause* of human volition be *within the mind*, or *extrinsic* of it. And, that act of the will wherein we deliberate and suspend with respect to some future election and action, no more takes place without a motive than any other act of the will: nor, is this motive any more excited by the mind, than the motives to its other exertions.

The Doctor speaks of a power of *awakening in ourselves motives to suspend*. Does he mean that the suspending act awakens its own motives, and then these motives produce the suspension? Is there this agreeable play of mind and motive alternately operating—begetting, and then being begotten of each other? Or is the *originating* act with respect to suspension without any motive, sovereignly exerted in order to bring the mind within the reach of motives, that it may be governed by them? And are these motives, thus sovereignly awakened, those in the view of which the mind is determined to suspend? Certainly not: but, those acts of the will which are originated by the mind, are without motive, and sovereignly put forth in order to awaken in this same mind motives to some future action.

If men awaken in themselves motives to *suspend*, the *originating, self-determined* act of the mind, is not *the act of suspension*, but *that act which awakens in the mind a motive to suspend*. To originate an act of *suspension*, and to *awaken in ourselves motives to suspend*, must be two very different acts. A power to perform the *first*, renders a power for the *last* quite unnecessary. He who can *originate* an act of suspension, has no need of a power to *awaken in himself motives to suspend*. The *first* of these may be without a motive, as well as the *last*. And, where an *originating power* is possessed, the mind has no need of the round-about way of *first* sovereignly constituting its motives, and *then* being influenced by them:—Especially, as there might be danger in that case that the mind would *negative*
the

the present motive to suspension ; and, have the same ground to go over again. How long this power of *awakening* and *negating* motives, might retard the act of suspension, is utterly uncertain. And, after all, this suspending power is the proof that men possess a power of self-determination !

Nothing, in short, is more unintelligible than the idea of a *power in men to cause and produce* exercises of will in themselves—a power back of the will, and behind it, pushing and crowding it into action. And, yet this power must be exercised by men *in order to their putting forth acts of will* : consequently, must be a power, the exercise of which implies and contains in it no act of will : and, therefore, men must be wholly involuntary in it, and in its exertions—a power, be it *in or out of use*, of which men can have no manner of consciousness or perception. This power is, perhaps, the same as the Doctor means by *moral capacity*. He tells us, “ the author of our beings is the proper cause of our moral capacity—this capacity, the effect of his inspiration, is the *proper cause* of volition.”* This capacity, therefore, in order to be a proper *cause*, must be exerted. If it be not exerted, it can produce no effect. This the Doctor seems to allow : for, he immediately adds, “ It may be well improved, or neglected and perverted.” But, if it be exercised, it must be exercised *voluntarily* ; otherwise, the acts of will consequent upon it are the effects of an *involuntary cause*. And if so, How can moral agents, as the Doctor asserts, § be themselves the *efficients* of their own volitions ? But, if this capacity be *voluntarily* exerted, How is it the *cause* of volition ? Doth it cause that act of will whereby it is exerted in order to produce an act of will ? Is the capacity the cause of that use of itself whereby it is *improved* or *neglected* ? How, and in what way is it, that it must be improved, in order to its own improvement ; or neglected, in order to the neglect and perversion of itself ? How
moral

* p. 22.

§ p. 41.

moral capacity should be the proper cause of volition, needs to be explained. Every attempt to explain such a proposition, however, must serve to confute it.

But no further argumentation, it may perhaps be thought, need be had on this subject. Nothing is more inconsistent with itself than the idea of a *power of self-determination*. Language affords no phrase, composed of so small a number of terms, which contains more, or more palpable, absurdities.

Before we leave the subject, however, it may not be impertinent to state some of the *consequences* which naturally flow from the supposed existence of this power of self-determination in men—a power of awakening in themselves new motives, and negating the old. If such a power imply things inconsistent with acknowledged truths, and the plain declarations of the word of God; the existence of it is not to be admitted, or supposed.

1. The admission of this supposed power in men, effectually subverts the doctrine of the *divine decrees*. By the *decrees of God* are to be understood the *determination of his will* that certain objects or events shall exist. Whatever God hath *decreed* shall take place, *certainly will* take place: otherwise, his counsel will not stand. If his decree extend to human volitions, and to the free actions of men, those volitions and actions of men which are the objects of such a decree, will infallibly come into existence. To suppose a *divine decree* consistent with the uncertainty and contingency of the existence of its object, is to make it nothing; or, to make the purposes of God with respect to the future existence of objects and events, no more to be confided in, or relied on, than those of weak, impotent men.

If there be indeed contingency and uncertainty with respect to the existence of those things which *God has declared shall come to pass*; his declaration can afford no just ground of confidence, to his creatures. Yet, the declarations and predictions of the word of God, extend

extend to the *voluntary actions and designs of men* :— yea, these are principal objects of the decrees of God revealed in his holy word : at least, there are a greater number of decrees and declarations respecting the free actions of men, and the events which necessarily involve and imply them, than with respect to any thing else. And if there be *uncertainty* with respect to their taking place, How can we confide in divine predictions ?

But if men have a power of *originating their own acts of will*—if they are themselves the *efficients of their own volitions*—if the intelligent spirit be *the cause of its own volitions*, How is it conceivable that the existence of these volitions should be made previously certain by a *divine decree* ? If a divine decree hath made the future existence of the acts of the will certain, the *exercise* of those acts of will is certainly and infallibly connected with the decree ; and, therefore, certainly and infallibly connected with something extrinsic of the moral agent who is the subject of them. If something extrinsic of moral agents has made the existence of their volitions certain, the existence of these volitions depends on *that* out of the agent himself which gave certain futurity to them.

On the other hand ; if men are the *efficients* of their own acts of will, and possess a power of *originating* them ; none but moral agents themselves can give existence to their acts of will. And, if no one but man can give existence to his acts of will, no one else can make their existence certain. But, if the existence and certainty of the volitions of men depend on the subjects of them ; their existence and certainty do not depend on the will and decree of God. And, if their existence do not depend on the will and decree of God, we may, then, determine there is no divine decree concerning them. What ideas can we have of a *divine decree* that certain human volitions shall take place, *which* nevertheless gives no certainty of their coming into existence, and *on which* their existence is independent ?

If human *volitions* are independent on the decree and will of God for their existence; then, those events, also, which are dependent on the volitions of men, and which cannot take place otherwise than as the effects of human volitions, must be equally independent on a divine decree. And, whatever comes into existence independently of a divine decree, cannot be the object of such a decree. On this hypothesis, What is there left to be the object of a divine decree? To what latitude may we admit that the decrees extend? Surely, no further than to God's own immediate acts; or, those things which He, either mediately or immediately, effects by his own almighty power.

But, to suppose human volitions to be *effected*, either mediately or immediately, by the power of God, will not admit men themselves to be the *efficients*, the *causes* of their own acts of will. Therefore the divine decrees, it must not be admitted, extend to the *internal exercises* of man. Yet, the *external actions and conduct* of men depend on their internal exercises—their volitions. Neither may the latter, then, be the objects of a divine decree giving certainty to their existence, any more than the former. To few things indeed, therefore, and those the least important in God's moral kingdom, may it be admitted that the decrees of God extend.

What, then, shall we make of our Bibles? And, what of the numberless *divine decrees* there published respecting human actions—the purposes and conduct of men? The task of reconciling the scripture-doctrine of the *divine decrees* with a self-determining power in men with respect to their own acts of will, it may be presumed will not be executed, or even undertaken, by the Doctor.

2. The admission of this supposed power of self-determination in men, not only subverts the *doctrine* of the *decrees* of God, but *that*, also, of his *foreknowledge*. The foreknowledge of the Deity implies a certainty of the existence of the things foreknown.

With

With respect to any event, the future existence of which is uncertain, it *may be* that it shall never take place. And, if it may be that it shall never take place, it cannot, at the same time, be certain that it will ever exist. To say that it is *certain* that some particular event will exist, and yet it *may be* that it never shall come into existence, is absurd. It is the same as saying that it is *certain* that it will exist, and yet it is *uncertain* whether it will, or not. Whether the divine foreknowledge *causeth* the certainty of the future existence of things foreknown, or not ; it evidently supposes and *necessarily implies* this certainty. *Knowledge implies certainty*. When there is no *certainty* with respect to the future existence of events, there can in the nature of things be no *knowledge* that they will exist. Uncertainty of the futurity of their existence, necessarily precludes a *knowledge* of their future existence.

Hence it is evident that there is *certainty* of the future existence of every event which is the object of the *foreknowledge* of God. And, if the foreknowledge of God extend to all future events whatever, even all events which ever were future, as it certainly doth ; it clearly follows, not only that there is *now* a *certainty* with respect to all future events which ever will be, that they shall take place ; but, also, that with respect to all past events of every kind, there was an antecedent *certainty* of their existence. This certainly follows upon the admission of the absolute universality of the divine foreknowledge respecting all events.

Whatever events are certain as to their future existence, are so *necessarily and in their own nature* ; or, their existence is *made certain* by something else. The certainty of their future existence must lie in the things themselves ; or, it must arise from something without them. But, if the events which are the objects of divine foreknowledge, are *in their own nature* certain of future existence ; their future existence is, in the highest sense, *necessary* ; and, it is not, and cannot be,

in the power of any being or thing without them, to prevent their existence. That which has certainty of future existence aside from any thing out of itself, cannot be prevented coming into existence in any way whatever. But, to suppose this kind of certainty with respect to the events which are the objects of the divine foreknowledge, would introduce a most *absolute fatality*—a fatality incontrollable by the Deity himself; and, a fatality, which, according to the advocates for a power of self-determination, is utterly subversive of every idea of human liberty.

It being admitted that there is *certainty* of the future existence of all those events which are the objects of the foreknowledge of God; it therefore follows, that the certainty of their existence arises from something *out of themselves*. And, What other source of certainty of any future existence can there be, than the decree or will of God? If there can be any other source of certainty of *that which now is not—which hath no existence in itself*, Is God omnipotent? Is He the fountain of all being? Are all things dependent on Him, and on his will and pleasure? Certainly, no: but, there is, and must be, some other original source of being and existence—some other powerful and operating cause which brings forward events in their time and order.

If the *volitions* of men be the objects of the *foreknowledge* of God; it indubitably follows, that there is an antecedent *certainty* of their existence. And, if there be an antecedent certainty of the existence of those volitions of men which are foreseen by the Deity; the certainty of their existence must be, either *dependent*, or *independent*, on the will of God. If it be independent on the will of God, there must of necessity be some other source of their existence than the will, or power, of God: and, on whatever they are dependent, their existence must be so connected with some cause out of themselves, that they cannot be considered as contingent events,

To

To say that men are dependent on God for their *capacity* for volition and action ; but, that *volition* and *action* are dependent only on men who are the agents, will afford no relief ; unless it be denied that there is an antecedent certainty that human volitions and actions will, in fact, be what they are ; and no other. If there be this antecedent certainty, it is then certain that men will exert their capacities in such volitions and actions only as do take place : and, consequently, previously certain that they would be exerted in one particular way, and in no other—An idea as utterly inconsistent with the Doctor's notions of liberty, as that of the most absolute decrees.

But, if there be no antecedent certainty that the capacity for human volition and action will be exerted in some particular acts of will in distinction from all others ; there is, of course, no certainty that any particular acts of will, in distinction from all others, shall actually come into existence. And, if there be, in fact, no antecedent certainty that those acts of will which really do come into existence, shall take place in distinction from all others ; it cannot, before they do exist, be known to be certain that they will exist. That which is, in itself, uncertain, cannot in the nature of things be known to be certain. To suppose even the Deity to *know* them to be certain, is to suppose that *his knowledge* is contrary to the reality and truth of things. The Deity can know things to be, no otherwise than they are. If human volitions are *contingent in distinction from being certainly and infallibly connected with some antecedent, extrinsic cause*, they can be known by the Deity no otherwise than as being contingent. And, this seems to be the light in which the Doctor views the foreknowledge of God as it respects the voluntary actions of men. For, he quotes, with approbation, the following passage from "*Abernethy's discourse on divine omniscience*." "Foreknowledge has no influence at all upon the nature of things, to make the least alteration in them. The events

“ events which are necessary are foreknown as necessary ; and those which are contingent and voluntary, “ are foreknown no otherwise than as contingent and “ voluntary.”* It cannot be supposed, that either this writer, or the Doctor, supposes that any *events* are *in their own nature* necessary, or necessary with that kind of necessity which is predicable of the divine existence. This would be a sentiment too gross to be admitted by any christian Divine. Not only so, but it would be most evidently and palpably contradictory to all the Author’s ideas of human liberty. By *necessary* events, must, therefore, be understood, such events as are certainly and infallibly connected, in their existence, with some antecedent, extrinsic cause. By *contingent and voluntary* events, must, accordingly, be understood, such events as are neither necessary in themselves, and in their own nature, nor necessary by being infallibly connected in their existence with any thing out of themselves which now doth exist. In what other light can this Author be understood, when he speaks of *contingent and voluntary* events, in distinction from those which are *necessary*? To speak of an *event*, that is, something which hath *beginning of existence*, as necessary in any other sense than as infallibly and certainly connected with something out of itself, antecedently existing, is an absurdity. Consequently, this cannot be the necessity to which *contingency* and *voluntariness* are opposed. We have, therefore, sufficient authority to conclude, that by *contingent and voluntary events*, are meant such events as are neither *necessary in themselves by a necessity of nature*, nor *necessary by being certainly and infallibly connected, as to their existence, with something out of themselves which doth now actually exist*. These are the events which are foreknown by the Deity no otherwise than as contingent and voluntary. God’s foreknowledge of them must, therefore, be a foreknowledge of an utter uncertainty of their future existence arising, either

either from any thing in the nature of the events themselves, or from their connexion with any thing out of themselves. And, where shall language be found more fully and strongly to express a *real uncertainty* of their future existence? What knowledge, then, is it possible the Deity should have relative to their future existence, but a knowledge that it is utterly uncertain whether they will ever exist or not? But, are these the ideas we are to entertain of the divine foreknowledge? If so, What pre-eminency, as to the knowledge of many futurities, hath the Deity above men, yea, the weakest of men?

It is by no means suggested that these are really the ideas, either of Mr. Abernethy, or the Doctor. Undoubtedly they would, both, reprobate them. But, How will they avoid these consequences upon the hypothesis they adopt? If they can fairly rid themselves of them in consistency with their opinions respecting the contingency of human actions, they will do a very essential service to the republic of letters. But, to reconcile divine prescience with human liberty, (the Doctor undoubtedly means a power of self-determination) he adviseth his readers in the beginning of his section on foreknowledge, is a task which he is not about to undertake. He rather supposeth no human understanding capable of discerning their consistency with each other. He ranks this with those subjects which are "high and too wonderful for us;" such as the divine *eternity* and *infinity*, the *trinity* and *satisfaction*, &c. But, would the Doctor suggest that there is the like apparent inconsistency and contradiction in these doctrines, as in the supposition that things which are in fact *contingent*, and *uncertain as to their future existence*, should be *foreknown*? How discouraging this to every attempt to vindicate these doctrines, and the scheme of christianity in general, against the objections and cavils of infidels! Speaking of these doctrines, of the scheme of christianity, and of the moral government of God, the Doctor says, "Al-
" though

"though we have such evidence in general of the truth and reality of the things above-mentioned, as in a manner compels our belief; yet, when the question is put, How can these things be? we discern *insuperable difficulties*—at the same time we are conscious infidelity would involve us in difficulties still greater."* But, is the human race *fated* to such *insuperable difficulties*, which ever side of the question be embraced, relative to the truth and doctrines of christianity? Why has not the most perfect scepticism long ere now spread itself over the far greater part of the human race? When it is inquired how those things which have been embraced and confessed by the christian world in all ages can be; the Doctor says we discern *insuperable difficulties*: but, at the same time the Doctor is confident that *infidelity* would involve in it still greater difficulties; yea, he says that we are conscious that it would. Is not the Doctor conscious, also, that the infidel and the sceptic would deny this? Is he not conscious that they would dispute the justness of the scales in which he weighs *insuperables*, and takes the different degrees of their weight?

That the being and attributes of God are *incomprehensible*, no one, it is presumed, will deny. But, by no means doth it follow from thence that there are *insuperable difficulties* attending the belief of his existence and perfections. The same, also, may be said respecting the scheme of christianity, and the moral government of God. But, to suppose that our belief of the existence of objects and things which we cannot comprehend, involves the same *insuperable difficulties* as the *foreknowledge* of the existence of *that* which is, nevertheless, *absolutely uncertain and contingent*; pays but a poor compliment to divine revelation.

It is by no means apprehended that it was the Doctor's design to weaken the evidence of divine revelation in general, or, of the important doctrines of it.

But,

But, if the subjects of divine revelation, in the most important articles, be in fact attended with difficulties that are *insuperable*—yea, as insuperable and unsurmountable as are contained in the hypothesis that it can be *foreknown* that events will take place where it is utterly *uncertain* whether they will ever exist, or not ; How can we expect that the belief of divine revelation will ever become very general ; much more, that it will ever have an universal spread in our world ?

But further ; some of the Doctor's observations respecting the divine prescience, made with much justice, if we mistake not are perfectly inconsistent with all the ideas he expresseth of human liberty. He says, " To him who calleth things that are not as though they were, and with whom a thousand years are as one day, the knowledge of futurity is *present knowledge*."* It may reasonably be concluded that the Doctor's idea is, that those objects and events which are *future* to us, whose knowledge and perceptions are *successive*, have *present existence* in the divine mind, or view : otherwise God's knowledge of futurity would not differ from the knowledge which, in some cases, we obtain. For, he justly observes, that " In an infinite understanding there is no before or after—no succession of ideas." Yet, if the objects of the divine foreknowledge have not the same present existence in the mind of God as they ever will, or can, have ; the divine ideas must of necessity be successive. These, perhaps, are also the ideas of Mr. Abernethy, when he saith, " The futurity of contingent events is real—a free action now done, was yesterday, or in any preceding point of duration, as truly future, as it has to day actually come to pass."§

If the free actions of men have always had present existence in the divine mind—if, before they took place, they had real futurity, In what sense is it that they are *contingent*? There could be no contingency

K k

with

with respect to them, inconsistent with their having *real futurity* before they took place ; or, inconsistent with their having *present existence* in the divine mind : therefore, no *contingency* inconsistent with a most *absolute and infallible antecedent certainty* of their future existence. And, if there be such an antecedent certainty of existence of the free actions of men, they cannot be free in the *Doctor's sense of freedom* ; but, must of necessity come into existence in connexion with some antecedent cause. With much justice, therefore, doth the Doctor observe, that the " attempt " to reconcile the divine prescience with liberty in the creature, " hath been executed in such a manner as hath rather evidenced the folly and arrogance of the undertakers, than cleared the subject. " *

Such difficulties as these would, with many, discourage every attempt to vindicate a scheme of liberty so manifestly clogged and incumbered with them. But, no objections against the mysterious power in men of causing their own acts of will, seem to be of any weight with Gentlemen who have once adopted the idea of the existence of such a power, and endeavoured to support and defend it. Every objection, and every argument, against the existence of such a power, fail ; or, are absorbed and perfectly swallowed up in the *vortex* of self-determination.

But, how the Doctor discovers that " Prescience is " a difficulty that incumbers Mr. Edwards's scheme " no less than that of his opponents, " is rather difficult to comprehend. In order that this may appear, however, he quotes Mr. Edwards as saying that " there must be a certainty in things themselves, before they are certainly foreknown ; " and, affirming the *former* to be the " foundation " of the *latter*. Mr. Edwards explains himself to mean, *not* the certainty of the *knowledge* there may be of the future existence of things foreknown ; but the certainty there is in *reality* of their future existence, aside from the knowledge

knowledge of this certainty. His words are, "Metaphysical or philosophical necessity are nothing different from their *certainty*. I speak not now of the *certainty* of *knowledge*, but the *certainty* there is in *things themselves*." On this the Doctor observes, "If by this *certainty* in *things themselves* be meant the same as the divine decrees and determinations, then these being the supposed foundation of *foreknowledge*, the latter cannot be the *cause* of events, as Mr. Edwards represents."* Where Mr. Edwards represents *foreknowledge* to be the *cause* of events, the Doctor has not told us. He abundantly represents *foreknowledge* as a *proof* of the *certainty* that the objects of it will exist: but, no where, as we have observed, as *causing* that *certainty*. And, how *Prescience*, according to this representation of the nature of it, is a difficulty which incumbers Mr. Edwards's scheme of necessity, or *certainty*, no less than that of his opponents, is hard to be discovered. That the existence of things should be previously *foreknown*, can, certainly, be no objection against that scheme of necessity which Mr. Edwards defends.

The Doctor proceeds in stating the difficulties which arise from *Prescience* on Mr. Edwards's scheme; and says, "If the purposes and decrees of God, or his determinations as to futurity, be antecedent to *foreknowledge*, and the foundation thereof, then his will is determined at random, by blind contingency, without design and foresight—guided by no wisdom, no motive, no intelligent dictate whatever—he only acts by an *Hobbistical* fatality." But, is it a dictate of the common reason of men, that if God foresee that *certain events* shall take place in distinction from others, because he has determined that they shall, therefore his determinations were "guided by no wisdom," but were "without counsel and wisdom?" When a man contemplates building a mansion-house, Doth the *foresight* he hath of its dimensions and form, which

arose from his *determination* to build of such a particular form and such dimensions, prove that his will, in that case, was determined “at random—guided by no wisdom, no motive?” When the Doctor determined to make and publish remarks on Mr. Edwards’s Inquiry, &c. as a *consequence of this determination* he *forelaw* that his “Examination” would contain certain particular arguments and objections. Doth it from thence follow that, in the choice of his arguments and objections, his will was determined *at random—guided by no wisdom?*

The divine knowledge comprehends and embraces every possible object and event. And, because the divine mind *forelaw* that *certain particular events* would take place, *because he determined that they should*, Doth it from thence follow that his mind was “guided by no wisdom” in this determination? The reader, perhaps, may judge that it was “through want of reflection and research—through inattention” to the reasonings of Mr. Edwards, that the Doctor has made such an objection.

Here, then, we have the arguments by which the Doctor proves that “Prescience is a difficulty which incumbers Mr. Edwards’s own scheme no less than that of his opponents.” The *first* is, that Mr. Edwards’s scheme doth not admit foreknowledge to be the *cause* of events, or of their *certainly*: the *second*, that it implies that the determinations of the divine mind that certain particular events in distinction from others should take place, were without motive or wisdom. Whether there be any weight in these objections—any justice in the Doctor’s conclusions—the candid and impartial public will judge. The same impartial public may, possibly, judge that a candid construction of Mr. Edwards’s argument would not have permitted the Doctor to represent him as maintaining that the *divine will is determined prior to KNOWLEDGE*. People in general will see no difficulty in supposing that the determinations of the divine
vine

vine mind respecting the existence of events, are formed in *infinite wisdom*; and, at the same time, that the Deity *knows* that *certain events* shall take place, *because he has determined that they shall*. Should it be considered by the public that the Doctor maintains the divine *foreknowledge* of the existence of events to be antecedent to God's *decrees* that they shall exist; mankind will be liable to suppose that *his doctrine*, not Mr. Edwards's, subjects the Deity to "an *Hobblistical fatality*." For, if events have fixed certain futurity antecedent to the determinations of the divine mind concerning them, it is easy to see there is a cause somewhere operating superior to the divine will.

3. To admit a power of self-determination in men, is inconsistent with the supposition that *holy affections* are the effect of the *immediate influence of the Spirit of God* on the heart. It is as inconsistent with the existence of this supposed power, to admit the Deity to be the cause of *holy*, as of *unholy* affections. If the *moral capacity* with which God hath endowed us be the proper cause of *volition*, it is as much the proper cause of those which are *holy*, as of those which are *unholy*; and, men determine themselves as much to *holiness* as to *sin*. This the Doctor's argument really admits. For, he saith, "Were there not a proper cause in the mind, the exercises and actions of mankind would uniformly be such as the order of our nature points out. And, the supposition of the *fall* of angels or men would be as wild, as the supposition of the everlasting mountains moving out of their place, or the interruption of the harmony of the spheres. At least it would be viewed in no other light than any alteration in the natural world, or suspension of the laws of nature. The latter might as well be judged criminal and morally evil, as the former. If the cause of the actions and exercises of moral agents be not in themselves, then the Deity is the proper, efficient cause of them."* This implies the motions of the

the human will, if caused by divine efficiency, to be as perfectly *mechanical* as those of the heavenly bodies; and, that neither virtue nor vice are any more properly predicable of them—that exercises of *love* are no more of the nature of virtue, than the *harmony* of the spheres; nor, of *hatred* of the nature of vice, than tempests and storms. And, this must evidently be the truth, if it be essential to *moral* action that the “mind of the agent be the true cause of his own election and actions.” If no actions, or elections, are morally free but those which are caused by the agents themselves—if the moral capacity in men be the proper cause of *volition*; it is as absurd to speak of *virtue*, or *holiness*, as an effect of *divine efficiency*, as, *vice* and *moral evil*. It is as essential to the *virtuousness* of human actions that men be the proper causes of them, as to their *viceousness*. An act of the will which is caused by divine efficiency, can no more partake of the nature of *holiness*, than it can, of *sin*. And this is acknowledged by some of the advocates for a power of self-determination; particularly, a late noted writer on universal salvation.* He manifestly supposeth it to be inconsistent with the liberty of the creature, and the morality of his actions, for divine immediate efficiency to be exerted for the production of any exercises of will of any kind whatever. And, in this, he was perfectly consistent with himself. By the passage just quoted from the “Examination, &c. continued,” we may conclude the Author entertained the same view of the subject: nor could he, indeed, in any consistency with himself, admit *holy*, any more than *sinful*, affection, to be the fruit of *divine efficiency*. How, then, are we to understand the Doctor, when he speaks of “the *strivings of the divine spirit*; § the efficaciousness of means *through the divine concurrence* with them; || the *Spirit of God* given with the gospel; ¶ the “means and influences of grace,” &c. ?*** Can it be that

* Dr. Chauncey. continued, p. 25.

§ Examination, p. 112.
** Examination, p. 107.

¶ p. 112.

‡ Examination

that he meant to be understood of any *immediate influences of the Spirit of God* upon the minds of men, producing holy affections? Or, did he use these expressions as *phrases of course*, in conformity to custom and prevailing notions of christians? If the Doctor designed to intimate any *immediate agency of the Spirit of God* in the production of holy affections, it was in perfect inconsistency with his whole scheme respecting moral liberty. But, if *this idea* of divine influences be excluded, as it must be if *men are the causes of their own acts of will*, What are we to make of those passages of Scripture which speak of *believers* as being "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"*—as being *born of the spirit*†—of all true virtue and holiness, as being *fruits of the spirit*, &c.‡ What can be more unmeaning and unintelligible than such passages and expressions as these, if the proper cause of human exercises and actions be *IN THE MIND*? And, "on any other hypothesis, the supposition of the fall of angels or men would be as wild, as that, of the everlasting mountains moving out of their place, or the interruption of the harmony of the spheres."

Here, then, the reader hath a view of some of the natural and inevitable consequences of the Doctor's sentiments respecting human liberty and the powers of men. They are utterly subversive of the doctrines of the *divine decrees* and *particular election*. Yea, so full and open is the Doctor in rejecting these doctrines, that on the hypothesis of its being *determined* beforehand that any of the unregenerate shall not use the means of grace, or shall not succeed, he challengeth any man to shew how the gospel can be a privilege to them, or they liable to a greater damnation for abusing it.¶

And, as to the natural consequences of his scheme of human liberty, as it respects the *foreknowledge* of God, the Doctor supposeth the *wisest of men* to view it

as

* John, i. 13. † John, iii. 6. ‡ Galat. v. 22, 23. ¶ Examination, p. 115.

as incapable of being reconciled with the prescience of God by *any human understanding*.*

Whether, what the Doctor hath advanced be not equally irreconcilable with the scripture-representations of the immediate influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of men, in the production of *holy affections*, the candid and intelligent reader will now judge.

These are difficulties which greatly embarrass the Doctor's scheme of sentiment; nor, can he justly expect that it will universally prevail, until he remove them out of the way.

But, lest we exceed the proper limits of an Appendix, it is time to proceed to observations on some other parts of the Doctor's "Examination of Mr. Edwards continued." His leading objection to Mr. Edwards's scheme is, that it implies the *Decree* or *Will* of God to be the proper, original cause of the existence of moral evil. This, the Doctor thinks he has abundantly proved: and, this being proved, he supposes it sufficient to subvert Mr. Edwards's whole scheme; because, as he expresseth it, "it destroys the divine moral character, and renders it impossible that the creature should be a moral agent. "It is," he says, "to ascribe the sin of man to God in such a sense as we cannot attribute it to the devil, without bringing a railing accusation against him."§ That Mr. Edwards's scheme respecting the origin of evil destroys the divine moral character, the Doctor infers from this consideration, if we understand him, that it implies evil in the divine mind itself. He supposeth that the *cause* must necessarily partake of the *nature* of its effect. He saith, "Whether, therefore, we suppose that sin arose from the want or withdraw of divine influence and assistance, or from divine agency and efficiency, or that creatures were made wicked at first, *the nature of sin cannot be separated from its cause*.——That if one moral agent (whether creature or creator) is supposed to be the positive cause

* Examination continued, p. 95.

§ p. 66.

“cause of sin in another, so much sin as to be attributed to the efficiency of the former, is to be taken from the criminality of the latter, and set to the cause and producer of it.”* The Doctor supposes that the “cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked;” that a disposition produced in creatures by a cause extrinsic of their own minds “cannot partake of the nature of vice, viewed in relation to the *subject*, however it doth, viewed in relation to the *cause* and producer of it.”§

That moral evil hath a cause, yea, an *efficient* one, is allowed by the Doctor. He says, “Now if they” (moral agents) “are not the *efficients* of their own sins, the Deity must be; else sin would have no efficient cause at all—every sin would be an effect without a cause—to say which, we agree with Mr. Edwards, would be absurd.”|| On this we remark, that the existence of sin must be *necessary*, with all *that necessity* which Mr. Edwards urgeth, and to which the Doctor objecteth. To say that sin is the effect of a cause, yea, an *efficient* one, is the same as to say that its existence is *certainly and infallibly* connected with that cause. Nothing can, with propriety, be termed an *efficient cause* of an event, with which the existence of the event is not indissolubly connected. *That* with which the existence and taking place of sin is not thus firmly and certainly connected, cannot be termed an *efficient cause*—unless a cause may be said to be *efficient* which produceth *no effect*. We remark further,

That sin may, yea necessarily must arise from the efficiency of a cause extrinsic of itself: and, consequently, from the efficiency of a cause, or from an *efficiency*, which is not, *itself, sin*. If sin arise from a cause out of itself, it is absurd to suppose the *cause* to be *sin* or *sinful*. *Cause* and *effect* are two distinct things. Sin is the *effect*, the *cause* of which is to be sought. To say that the *cause* of sin is *sinful*, is only going back from *one effect* to *another*; and,

L 1

leaves

* p. 79.

§ p. 75, 76.

|| p. 65.

leaves us as much in the dark respecting the *cause* of sin as we were before. No effect whatever can be supposed originally to arise from a *sinful cause*, unless the first cause of all things be sinful.

Sin, it is allowed, is an effect. Wherever, or in whatever, sin be to be found, we find an *effect*. This is the effect, of which the *cause* is to be sought. In the inquiry after the *cause* of sin, nothing which is *sinful* can be considered as sustaining the relation of *cause*; or, with the least propriety, have the epithet of *cause* given it. We might with as much propriety account for the existence of *light*, by saying that it arose from the efficiency of a *luminous cause*, as for *sin*, by saying it arose from a *sinful cause*.

To say that sin hath a cause, necessarily excludes the idea of sin, or sinfulness, from the cause. If the *cause* of sin be *sinful*, What was the *cause* of its sinfulness, or of the *sin which is in that cause*? It is "absurd" to say it hath no cause. Consequently, *this sinfulness*, also, hath a cause, even an *efficient one*. And, upon the Doctor's principles, the cause which produceth *this wickedness*, is, also, *itself wicked*. In this way of accounting for sin, either no cause at all is brought into view; or, cause and effect are perfectly confounded with each other.

To suppose the *agent*, or his *moral capacity* or *power of self-determination*, or whatever else can be imagined in the creature, to be the *cause* of his sinfulness, will afford no relief. If the *agent* be the cause of his own sin, he must be sinful antecedently to the *sin which he causeth or produceth*: for, "the cause which produceth wickedness is wicked." So, if our *moral capacity*, or a *power of self-determination*, be, either of them, the *cause* or *producer* of the agent's sin, this moral capacity, or self-determining power, must, also, be sinful. But, as the Doctor justly observes, "the author of our beings is the proper cause of our moral capacity."* On this plan, therefore, the
author

* p. 22.

author of our beings must, also, be sinful. The Doctor's argument stands thus: "The author of our beings is the proper cause of our moral capacity: this capacity is the proper cause of volition. The volition being supposed to be sinful, the capacity which is the cause of it, must, also, be sinful—for, "the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked." But, God being the cause of our *capacity*, if *that* be wicked, What, on the Doctor's principles, shall be said of the cause?

Further; the Doctor supposeth that moral agents are *themselves* the *efficient cause* of their own *vicious volitions*. He says, "He (Mr. Edwards) denies that moral agents are *themselves* the efficient cause of their own vicious volitions; as it is certain that this would imply a power of self-determination in them: now if they are not the *efficients* of their own sins, the Deity must be; else sin would have no efficient cause at all—every sin would be an effect without a cause—to say which, we agree with Mr. Edwards, "would be absurd."* But, if there be a distinction betwixt *cause* and *effect*—if they be not perfectly the same, the one neither preceding nor following the other; *moral agents* must be sinful antecedently to those vicious volitions of which they are, themselves, the efficient cause. And, if moral agents are sinful antecedently to their effecting in themselves *vicious volitions*, the *efficient cause* of *moral agents* must, also, be sinful: for, *the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked*. Do not the Doctor's reasonings as certainly make the Deity the efficient cause of sin as Mr. Edwards's? The Doctor alloweth that sin hath a cause: but, then urgeth that the *cause* of it is, also, sinful. Where will he stop short of the *first cause*? Why then, in treating on moral subjects, virtue and vice, is it not as necessary on the Doctor's principles, as on Mr. Edwards's, to "detach their cause from their nature?"§ Had the Doctor carefully considered the

L 1 2

consequences

* p. 65. § p. 75.

consequences of his own concessions and reasonings, many of the observations he makes on the "futility" of Mr. Edwards's distinction betwixt the *nature* and *cause* of volition, in his fifth section, would have been found unnecessary. If sin hath a cause, and cause and effect be distinct from each other; our inquiries will necessarily lead us back to the first and original cause. And, if the *cause* of sin be *sinful*, there surely can be no stop till we get back to the *first cause of all things*. "And, on this supposition, the moral perfections and government of God, and revealed religion, must be disbelieved."*

No sentiment can be more absurd in itself, or more subversive of all principles of morality, than that which implies the *cause* of sin to be, itself, *sinful*. Wherever *sinfulness* is to be found, or of whatever it be predicable, there is an effect. If sin be admitted to be an *effect*, as it is by the Doctor, we are necessitated to look for something as its cause *which is not sin* or *sinful*: otherwise, we lose the distinction betwixt cause and effect. To say that sinfulness is the cause of sinfulness, is no more than saying that a thing is the cause of itself. If *sin* hath a cause, it must necessarily be a cause that is *sinless*. If *self-determination* be its cause, it must necessarily be a *sinless* or *holy self-determination*. But, that a *sinless, holy self-determination*, or a *sinless, holy capacity*, should be the cause of a *vicious act of will*, is a supposition perfectly inconsistent with the idea that the *cause* of wickedness is *wicked*.

To say that the *cause* of moral evil, is, itself, also *morally evil*, is only saying that *one sin is the cause of another*. In our inquiries, therefore, into the *origin* of moral evil, we are necessarily carried back to a cause which is *not morally evil*. If moral evil hath a *cause* of its existence, if it hath *beginning* of existence, it is in itself absurd to suppose the *cause* of its existence, to be any otherwise than *holy* and *sinless*: for, whenever we speak of *any thing* as *sinful*, we only speak of

an

an effect. The *cause* of this effect, therefore, in order that it may be *an effect*—yea, *the very effect* the *cause* of which we are seeking, must necessarily be considered as *sinless* and *holy*.

In order to maintain that it is inconsistent with the moral character of God for Him to *cause* the existence of moral evil, the Doctor must prove that “volition springs from itself,”* and deny that sin hath any cause out of itself; which is the same as to deny that it *hath a cause*. For, if it hath a cause out of itself, *this cause is not sinful*—otherwise, cause and effect are the same, utterly undistinguishable from each other.

OBJ. “If it must of necessity be that the *cause of sin* “is *sinless*, or *holy*, Why will it not follow that the “*cause of virtue* must be *vicious*—of *holiness*, *sinful*? “If *sin* in the creature require a cause of a different “nature from *itself*, *the effect*; Why may it not be “argued with equal justice that *holiness* in the crea- “ture, also, requires a *cause* of an opposite and differ- “ent nature? And, if this be but the natural conse- “quence of the preceding reasonings respecting *sin* “and *its cause*, it is sufficient to show that they are “fallacious.”

ANS. Were it true that the existence of moral virtue, or holiness, in the intelligent system, had a *beginning*, the objection would be of weight. But, were this true, it would imply that *that Being* whose existence is *without beginning*, is destitute of holiness; and is therefore sinful. If the existence of holiness, in the moral system, hath a *beginning*, it can be only in *creatures*; and, therefore, its existence must have been originated, if it *hath a cause*, by a being destitute of holiness: for, the being whose existence is *without beginning*, who is from everlasting, on this hypothesis must necessarily be supposed to be unholy. But this is infinitely far from being the truth. The existence of holiness, in the moral system, is coeval with that of the Deity—yea, its existence is as *necessary* as that of God:

God : it is essential to the Deity ; being the very divine nature itself, without which no such being as God could possibly exist. And, it is easy to see that a holy God may *produce holy existence*, and give *beginning to creature-holiness*. Here we discern no difficulty—no appearance of absurdity or inconsistency. So, could it be admitted that the Being who is from eternity is sinful, it might easily be supposed that he might produce sinful existence in creatures : and, in that case, it might be said that the *cause of sin* in creatures is *sinful*—“ the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked.” But, as this is infinitely far from being the truth, there can be nothing more reproachful to the Deity, in its natural and necessary consequences, than the position that *the cause of the existence of sin, is sinful*—“ *the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked.*” If *wickedness* hath both *cause* and *beginning*, the consequence is undeniable that *its cause is not wicked* ; but, that its existence was originated by a *cause which is not sinful, but holy*.

Sin is moral being, or existence. It is not merely such an attribute of the moral existence where it is found, as that it can be abstracted from it, and yet *that* existence remain. Hence it is that holiness, in men, is spoken of, in the scriptures, as the object of a *new creation*. Sin is moral affection, an exercise of the will. This moral affection, or exercise of will, requires a *cause* of its existence, and *that*, too, out of itself, as much as any other moral existence. But, to suppose *its cause to be sinful* will necessarily lead to the absurdity of supposing the *first cause of all things* to be sinful.

The Doctor's objection to the supposition that the *decree* or *will* of God was properly the originating cause of the existence of moral evil, is, that this would imply moral evil in God. This the Doctor *asserts* : but the assertion needs the support of evidence, which the Doctor has not brought. What he saith on the subject consists rather in addresses to the imagination, than

than reasonings. He labours to paint the doctrine in frightful colours, that men may be deterred from embracing it. It seems as though he felt the want of discernment to discover the sophistry of those arguments which are urged in support of the obnoxious tenet. Hence his quarrel with *metaphysics*, to disgrace which, he has written a whole section; not the least remarkable part of which is, that St. Paul "*disclaims metaphysics*—not surely as being above his abilities; but, "as of no use on the most essential point of religion—*" rather injurious than helpful."** Had not the Doctor's argument against metaphysical reasoning been in distress, it never would have sought aid from such a quarter as this.

It is common for gentlemen who espouse and endeavour to defend the doctrine of a power of self-determination in men, to raise an outcry against metaphysical reasoning. It seems as though they had felt the disadvantage of it to their cause. The use of *sophistical argumentation* no one will attempt to defend. But, are not the gentlemen whose sagacity enables them to discover a power of *self-motion* in the human mind, able to detect the fallacy of those reasonings which are so unfriendly to their darling opinion? Is there no one able to take off the *thin veil* which covers the sophistry of those reasonings by which the existence of such a power is said to be impossible? Should this be done, it would be much more convictive and satisfactory to the public, than the most vehement exclamations against metaphysics. Should this be done, the controversy on this *disgustful* subject would be, at once, settled—at least until some metaphysical genius shall arise to discover objections hitherto unthought of against the existence of this mysterious power. This would give the world of mankind to see that the noble sentiments concerning liberty, so congenial to every generous feeling of the human mind, stand indeed on a firm basis, and are capable

* p. 138.

capable of solid and rational support. But, until this be done, the Doctor's sentiments respecting human liberty, will appear, at least to many, problematical; and some may possibly suspect that his exclamations against metaphysics betray his want of argument.

But, when the subject is calmly and dispassionately considered, What is there in the opinion, that the *will* or *decree* of God originated the existence of moral evil, so abhorrent from the dictates of reason and the common apprehensions of men? It is, certainly, not repugnant to the general apprehensions of mankind to suppose that nothing takes place, in the system, *contrary* to what God designed; or, which he designed and determined should never take place. To imagine that moral evil hath broken in upon the system, when God had determined that it should not, is an opinion which would shock the greater part of men. It would naturally excite distrust in God; and, beget ideas hardly reconcileable with that character which the holy One of Israel assumes when he declares, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*

How God causeth events to come into existence, is not for us to comprehend. All that we know about the matter, is that God *willeth*, for reasons in his own infinite mind, that they should exist, and *they do exist*. That human actions should come into existence in common with this divine will as their cause, no more prevents their freedom, than their coming into existence in connexion with any thing else as their cause. The *action* of the human mind, it is allowed by the Doctor, hath a cause. And, unless the mind be conscious of something besides its own action, it must of necessity be unconscious of the *cause* of this action, be this cause what it may. We know, indeed, that the human mind, over and above the consciousness it hath of its own *voluntary* exercises, is percipient in *speculative ideas*. But *these*, it is not urged by the Doctor, are the causes of volitions. The moral part of man, that which is the only object of praise, or censure, is actually

actually percipient only in exercise. To suppose it percipient when not in exercise, would be inconsistent with supposing it, either praise-worthy or blamable, *in those perceptions*; as this would imply *virtue and vice* to be involuntary—that we may be virtuous and vicious without any act of will. Were there, therefore, or could there be, any *such perceptions*, the mind would be as perfectly passive in them, as in its *speculative ideas*. No more, therefore, may any such perceptions, on the Doctor's plan, be allowed to be the *cause* of acts of will, than *mere speculations*. Hence it must appear absurd to suppose that men are *conscious* of the *causes*, or of the *operation* of the cause, of their own voluntary action. Be this cause what it may, or where it may, it matters not: be it, either this, or that, men are equally unconscious of its operation. And, if there be a *cause* of the exercises of the human will, this cause cannot be subject to the controul of volition, unless *causes* are under the controul of their *effects*. And, if it be not subject to the controul of *volition*, it is not subject to the controul of the *will*—unless the *will* controul it, and controul its own exercises too; and *that* without *willing*, that is *involuntarily*.

But, if human volitions be connected with the operation of a cause *involuntary* as to those who are the subjects of them; their connexion with *one thing* as a cause, no more than with *another*, destroys their morality, or takes away their freedom. They are as perfectly free, and sustain as truly a moral nature, if they come into existence in connexion with the holy purpose of God as their cause, as if they came into being in connexion with any thing else that can be imagined as their cause.

The Doctor admits that sin consists in voluntary exercise, and, that sin hath a cause. He maintains, with Dr. Watts, “that an intelligent spirit is the cause of its own volitions.”*

M m

cause,

cause, or a cause in which the *will* is not exercised. So that, on his own concessions, it must be that the volitions of men come into existence in connexion with a cause, of the operations of which they are not conscious. And this, certainly, is agreeable to the dictates of common sense.

Now, if virtue and vice are predicable of volitions which come into existence in connexion with a cause extrinsic of themselves, which the Doctor admits; and, in the exercises of these volitions the mind hath no consciousness of the operation of their cause; it must be perfectly immaterial to the virtuousness or viciousness of exercises of the will, what or where the cause is in connexion with which they come into existence: and if, immaterial as to their virtuousness or viciousness, then equally so to their moral freedom.

It is hence manifest that, for human voluntary exercises to come into existence in connexion with the *decree or will of God* as their cause, is in no measure inconsistent with their being, in a moral sense, free; and, in no measure inconsistent with their being worthy of censure, or praise. This is as evident upon the principles and concessions of the Doctor as on any hypothesis whatever.

And, to suppose that all human actions, of whatever nature or kind, be they either virtuous, or vicious, do in fact come into existence in consequence of the holy and wise purpose of God, and in connexion therewith, is perfectly agreeable to the representations of the word of God. This is a sentiment abundantly taught and inculcated in the holy scriptures. A great variety of passages might be adduced in proof of this: but, for the sake of brevity, we will mention only two; those are the passages which relate to the crucifixion of Christ, and, hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In the Doctor's section on texts of scripture misconstrued, he remarks on both of these. On the passages which speak of the crucifixion of Christ as a fruit of God's determination, or of the determinate counsel of
God,

God, the Doctor observes, " Now these texts either
 " imply an *efficient* determination of the Deity in this
 " event, or they do not : if they do not, they are no-
 " thing to the purpose for which they are produced
 " by the advocates for necessity. On the other hand,
 " if it can be shown that they really imply a divine
 " efficiency on the minds of the murderers of our
 " Lord, influencing and necessitating them to this hor-
 " rid deed ; then we shall not hesitate to admit that ev-
 " ery species and degree of wickedness proceeds from
 " the same efficiency."* Not to remark upon the im-
 proper application of the term *necessitating* in the pas-
 sage now before us, we only observe upon the short
 way the Doctor takes to evade the evidence from the
 holy scriptures of the inconsistency of his own senti-
 ments respecting human liberty. Instead of the *dull,*
round-about way of reasoning and argumentation to
 prove the sense of these passages not to be what his
 opposers urge ; he says, if it be so, " we shall not
 " hesitate to admit that every species and degree of
 " wickedness proceeds from the same efficiency."
 And, is this any *proof* that the *advocates for necessity*,
 as the Doctor terms them, misconstrue these texts ?
 They urge them as a proof that the existence of wick-
 edness is the object of a divine decree ; and, that it
 takes place as a certain consequence of this decree,
 and in connexion with it. " No," saith the Doctor,
 " they cannot mean any such thing ; for, that would
 " imply that all wickedness whatever, which ever
 " takes place, was *decreed* by the Deity." Admit it :
 But, is this any argument that the holy scriptures do
 not assert it ? The inquiry is, Whether the scriptures
 assert this doctrine ? To *say that they do not*, is not to
argue ; or, to produce the least kind of evidence that
 they do not most certainly imply the doctrine so stren-
 uously opposed. Nor, is it giving any reason at all
 why they should be considered as misapplied or per-
 verted by the Doctor's opposers. According to such

a mode of reasoning upon the scriptures, every one will see that it is forever impossible to determine any controversy by their authority. This is not to conform our sentiments on moral subjects to the holy scriptures, but, to bend these sacred oracles, by the weight of our own assertions, to our own preconceived opinions. On such a ground it is that the Doctor "*ventures*" to take it as "a first principle" that God is not the cause of sin; and, that mankind have an *immediate consciousness of liberty*,* meaning undoubtedly a power of self-determination. And, considering it as dangerous to bring these sentiments to the test of metaphysical discussion, he takes the shorter way of constituting them *first principles*; and, then no one ought to dispute them.

But, possibly it may be thought injurious to the Doctor to represent him as taking *so summary a way* to answer the argument from those passages of scripture which relate to the crucifixion of Christ; since he has endeavoured to show that they may be taken in a different sense from that in which they are understood by his opposers. The Doctor says there is a twofold sense in which events may be said to come to pass by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, without implying any active concurrence or efficiency of his power. § The first is, when events come to pass agreeably to the *predictions of his word*. But, was it not incumbent on the Doctor, in order to support his own construction of these passages, to show that God *predicts* certain events, and yet exerts no power, in order to bring them into existence? Are *divine predictions* of events to be considered as mere fortune-telling? Can they justly be considered in any other light than *declarations of what God designs and wills shall come to pass*? It is unsupposable that the *will* of the Deity should be *indifferent* with respect to the existence of those events which he lets his creatures know shall certainly come to pass: and, absurd to

* p. 127. § p. 107.

to imagine that his will opposeth their coming into existence. Divine predictions of future events must, therefore, be viewed as declarations that God *wills and designs* that those events shall come to pass. And, it is *God's will and design* thus revealed, that gives certainty to the future existence of the events which they respect. And, in connexion with this divine will thus revealed it is that the events do, in fact, take place. And, if this be so, let the candid reader judge whether *any event* which GOD predicts, can be supposed to take place "without implying any active concurrence of divine power." But, further, the Doctor urgeth that "such events as God determines not to prevent" by the interposal of his power, may also be said to "come to pass in the same way." But, is God's *not preventing*, and in this sense *permitting*, any cause at all of the events thus *permitted*? Let it be remembered that the Doctor himself supposeth it to be absurd, as has been before observed, to imagine that *sin has no efficient cause*. According to him, therefore, *that wickedness which God doth not, by his power, prevent men from being the efficient cause of, themselves, may be said to come to pass by the determinate counsel, foreknowledge and ordination of God*. But, will not every reader, at once, see that this construction holds for granted a power of self-determination in men; and, that men are the efficient causes of their own acts of will? When it is *proved* that men possess such a power, we may allow that those passages of scripture which foretel the crucifixion of Christ, and represent this event as a fruit of the determinate counsel of God, may intend no more than that God determined not to interpose, by his power, to save his Son from crucifixion. But, until this is *proved*, we shall not hesitate to conclude that the Doctor has said nothing to take off the force of the argument of his opposers drawn from the passages under consideration. So, that all he has said really amounts to no more than this, viz. that they *do not, cannot*, imply any efficient divine

divine determination with respect to the taking place of this event.

As to those passages of scripture where God is spoken of as hardening Pharaoh's heart, the Doctor gets over them in a manner equally concise and easy. He says, "Now that God did not, could not, thus harden Pharaoh," (that is, in the manner urged by his opposers) "is manifest from the clearest notices we have of the divine moral perfections."* *The clear notices the Doctor hath* of the divine moral perfections are the proof that *God did not harden Pharaoh's heart*, in such a manner as the opposers of *his* ideas of liberty urge these passages as a proof that *he did*. The clear notices, however, which the Apostle Paul had of the divine moral perfections, seemed to be somewhat different. For, alluding to the Mosaic history of God's treatment of Pharaoh, in hardening his heart, he makes this conclusion, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."§ The Apostle here makes use of an *active verb*, *he hardeneth*; and, an active verb used in a manner as truly implying agency and efficiency as words can well express. When such passages as these, with a great variety of others of the same tenour which might be mentioned, were it necessary, are urged as a proof that the will, or decree, of God really originated the existence of moral evil, Is it a sufficient answer to say, *that God did not, could not, thus do it, is evident from the clearest notices we have of the divine moral perfections?* Is this a sufficient authority for determining that these texts are misconstrued and misapplied by those who urge them as a proof that the Deity, for wise reasons, really *willed* that moral evil should exist? The public, certainly, have reason to expect some better proof that the sentiments of Mr. Edwards have not the authority of the word of God for their support.

But, why should it be thought unreasonable to suppose

* p. 112. § Rom. ix. 18.

pose that the Deity should so ordain that, for wise reasons, moral evil should exist in his system? Can any one believe that there is the same opposition of will, in the divine mind, to the taking place of such an event, as there is to the real nature of moral evil? No man, in his senses, will admit this: the consequences would be too repugnant to every idea of the *supremacy and almighty power* of God to be allowed. And, if the opposition of the divine will to the *nature of moral evil*, and to *its taking place in the system*, are not *one and the same*; How can it be made to appear that his *willing or ordaining* that it should take place, is inconsistent with his hating it with an infinite hatred? And, if it be consistent with the infinite purity and holiness of God, and his most perfect disapprobation of moral evil, that He should, nevertheless, for reasons in his own eternal mind, see fit to decree and ordain that it should exist; there will appear to be no inconsistency betwixt the *decrees* of God, and the *commands and prohibitions* of his word. The *moral law* is the rule and measure of *our conduct*—it points out what is fit *for us* to do, and what *in our characters* the Deity will view with approbation, or the reverse. The *decrees of God* relate to *his own conduct*; and, are the rule and measure of it in *his ordination and disposal of events*. It belongs to *God, and to him alone*, to say what events shall take place, and what, not. Nothing but obedience, and submission to his authority, belong to us. Nor, is it any more inconsistent with the divine purity and hatred of iniquity for him to *ordain*, than for him to *permit*, that it should take place. He *could have prevented* its existence, all agree: and, had he the same infinite aversion of will from *its taking place*, as he hath from *the nature of it*, he certainly would have done it.

Moral evil must, of necessity, have a cause of its existence. This is admitted by the Doctor. And, as moral evil had *beginning* of existence, it must of necessity have been originated by a cause which is *not morally*

morally evil, but *the reverse*. To admit that moral evil had *beginning of existence* in the system—that it hath a *cause*—that it was *originated by any thing besides itself*; and yet, to say that its *cause was morally evil*, is a perfect absurdity. To say that it hath *no cause* of its existence, is the same as to say that it *had no beginning*—therefore is *eternal*.

Whether moral evil be, itself, best for the world, is not a subject of debate amongst divines of any denomination. The affirmative of this no one has ever attempted to defend. The Doctor might have omitted the section in which he endeavours to prove that *moral evil is not best for the world*. He would not, then, have had occasion to assert that Mr. Edwards declares that it is. He saith, “Now were it admitted, that *moral evil is for the best*, as Mr. Edwards declares *he is certain it is*.”* Mr. Edwards’s words are, as quoted by the Doctor, “I believe there is no person of good understanding who will venture to say, he is certain that it is impossible it should be best,——that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world.”§ The intervening part of the sentence, omitted by the Doctor, is, “taking in the whole compass and extent of existence, and all consequences in the endless series of events.” Had the Doctor any authority from this passage, or from the next immediately following, to assert that Mr. Edwards declares that he is certain *moral evil is for the best*? Would the Doctor think himself candidly treated, should it be asserted that he had written a section to prove that *it is not best* there should be any such thing as moral evil in the system? Yet this might be asserted with as much propriety as he tells his readers that *Mr. Edwards declares he is certain that moral evil is for the best*. If the Doctor would oppose the real sentiments of Mr. Edwards, as he professeth to do, it will lie upon him to prove that, *all things considered, it is not, on the whole, best that moral evil hath taken place*. And, when

* p. 85. § p. 83.

when he has done this, he will not only have subverted Mr. Edwards's argument, but, also, discovered great imperfection in the system and government of God. The question is not, whether *moral evil be for the best*, but whether *that divine disposal and ordination, under which, and as a fruit of which, moral evil doth in fact take place, be for the best*. When it shall be not only asserted, but proved, by the Doctor, either, that moral evil doth not take place as a *certain fruit and consequence* of a divine ordination and disposal of things; or, that this divine ordination and disposal of things was not most perfectly wise and best; then, and not till then, it will be necessary to attempt a further vindication of Mr. Edwards against the reasonings and objections of the Doctor in the section before us.

That the existence of moral evil could not, possibly, have been originated by the will of God, the Doctor seems to think abundantly evident from a passage in the epistle of *James*—at least we might conclude so, from his frequent repetition of it. The passage is this, “Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”* A careful attention to the passage may, perhaps, convince us that it is not so pertinent to the Doctor's purpose as he seems to imagine. We know that the word *tempt* is used in different senses by the sacred writers. Sometimes it means *making trial of*, as metals are tried by fire. At other times it means *inviting or soliciting to sin*. This latter is the sense in which it is evidently used in the passage before us. When satan tempts men to wickedness, he doth it by perverting the truth, and representing objects under false colours, in order to allure. Thus as to the original temptation to our first parents; “Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?—Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing

N n

* James i. 13.

"*knowing good and evil.*"* As it is infinitely far from the Deity to be capable of being imposed on by falsehood and misrepresentation; it is equally far from him in such ways to impose on his creatures. He knows their entire dependence on him: and, whatever faculties and powers they possess, He knows they are absolutely dependent on him for knowledge, and for the instruction which is necessary to their walking in the way of duty and safety. God, accordingly, exhibits things in their true light, and under their proper colours. And, the exhibitions are made with such clearness—there is such a sufficiency of external light and means of knowledge, that, were it not for the selfish biases and prejudices of our hearts, we never need mistake with respect to the way, either of duty, or safety. A great variety of objects are set before us; and, those of different natures and qualities. We know that it is within the compass of divine power to cause them to appear to our understanding and judgment, however free from prepossession and bias, in very different colours from those in which, both in his word and by the tenour of his providence, he has taught us to view them. By such means we might necessarily be led into danger and evil, *without any bad intention.* Were we necessarily subjected, by divine providence, though our intentions were altogether upright and honest, to make a wrong judgment with respect to our duty and interest, we might be exposed to danger and evil without any fault of our own—We might be liable to walk in a way which God forbids, and still not be worthy to be blamed. Then, indeed, there might be a pretext for saying, *when we are tempted, we are tempted of God.* But, the warnings which God now, in fact, gives us, are abundantly sufficient to arm us against danger from every quarter, if we exercise proper care and candour in attending to them.

We are wholly dependent on God for the means of knowledge—

* Genes. iii. 1, 2, 5.

knowledge—for that intellectual light which is necessary to preserve us from evil and danger. But, if that which ought to be avoided should be made to appear eligible to our understanding and judgment; or, that which ought to be chosen, the reverse; and *that*, when the heart, or will, was free from prepossession and prejudice; we should *necessarily* be betrayed into evil. Then we should be led astray by the representations of things made *from without us* to our understanding and judgment. And, in that case, it might be said that we were tempted and betrayed by those appearances of things which they necessarily wear, and which were not given them by our prejudice. But, such is the goodness and faithfulness of God, that the means of knowledge we enjoy are every way equal to the duties he requires of us: so that, if we go astray, the fault must be our own. We never mistake, with respect to duty, unless it be through our own inattention and prejudice. So that “every man is tempted when he is drawn away *of his own lust, and enticed.*” When prejudice perverts the representations made to us in the word and providences of God, then we call evil, good; and, good, evil—put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Therefore, whenever we are *tempted*, in the sense in which the term is used in the passage under consideration, it is by the *lust of our own hearts*, and not by any thing in the *external state of things* tending to betray an honest mind into error, or mistake. This appears to be the sense in which the Apostle is to be understood when he says, “God cannot be tempted with evil; neither *tempteth he any man.*” And, if this be the case, let the reader judge whether it at all favours the Doctor’s hypothesis. What is here said only denies that the state and disposal of things in divine providence necessarily expose men to mistake their duty; or, that things are calculated, by the wise Disposer, to betray men into wrong ways. On the other hand, the Apostle teacheth us, that we never mistake our duty, or interest, but through some wicked

bias or lust of our own hearts. But, does such an assertion as this determine any thing with respect to a power of self-determination in men? Doth this certainly imply that the will of God is, in the same sense, opposed to the taking place of moral evil, as it is to its nature? Or, that moral evil hath not come into existence as a fruit of the wise and holy purpose of God? It implies that sin consisteth in the exercise of lust: and, that without some wicked bias of heart, we never should mistake our duty, or be betrayed into wrong ways. But, the Apostle is far from connecting this *lust* with its *cause* in order to determine it to be *criminal*: and, from saying any thing which would lead us to suppose that he ever had a thought that “the cause of wickedness is wicked.”

It is now left to the impartial public to judge what degree of support the doctrine of a power of self-determination in men hath received from Dr. Dana's publications; and, whether, after all that the Doctor hath said, the ground which Mr. Edwards had taken appears untenable. To the same tribunal must it be appealed to determine on the justice of the remarks we have, now, made on the “Examination of President Edwards's Inquiry continued.”

It now only remains that a proper attention be paid to the Doctor's *Strictures on the Essay on Moral Agency*, so called, as he terms it. This Essay the Doctor affects to treat with contempt. The public will judge how far it merits it, with more impartiality than the Doctor. They who maintain a public controversy are exceedingly prone mutually to accuse each other of unfairness: and this, probably, not wholly without reason. Such are the prejudices of men, that it is with difficulty we give the arguments of an opponent their just weight. How far the Doctor may have been injured in this respect, the public opinion will decide, notwithstanding any thing we may assert upon the subject. But, whether he can acquit himself of injustice in charging Mr. West with denying *original righteousness*,

ness, as he doth in the beginning of his *Strictures*, we shall refer to himself. In support of this assertion, he quotes page 55. of the *Essay*. There *habit* and *temper* are defined to mean a fixed connexion betwixt our *present exercises of will* and future exercises of the *same general nature*. Adam not being confirmed in innocence, there was no such established connexion betwixt his *first* and future *holy exercises of mind*. In this sense it was said that he had not a *holy temper*, or the *habit* of holiness. But, lest our ideas should be mistaken, it was immediately added, that the *first and original exercises* of our first parents were *holy—positively virtuous and good*.

How far the Doctor's remarks on the section on *power*, in the *Essay*, are just, we are content to leave to the decision of others. He conjectures that our use of the term *power*, and the application we make of it, are improper and without authority. Be this as it may, the principal question ought to be, whether our reasonings upon the subject are just. However, we imagined that the authority of Mr. Locke, and of Chamber's Dictionary, were sufficient to justify our application of the term: and, these authorities we had. The Doctor supposeth that, in the *Essay* professedly written on Moral Agency, "the subject *itself* has been kept wholly out of sight."* The reader will judge whether the ground of this supposition be not, that a *power of self-determination* is excluded. If *this power* be essential to moral agency, we freely allow that we have, in our definition, left men no power that is essential to it. Whether any thing we had said in the section on *power* be inconsistent with the praise-worthiness, or blame-worthiness, of human actions, we leave to others to determine.

Upon a review of the section on *motives*, we do not find it liable to the objections the Doctor hath made against it. *Motives*, considered as external objects or things, may be perceived by the intellectual faculty, without

without any tendency to engage the choice. But that which the mind *relisheth* in an object, or apprehends as *agreeable and lovely*, cannot be perceived and *rejected*—the relish, or perception of agreeableness, being in fact all the choice which is made of it. The reasons exhibited in the gospel why men ought to forsake their sins, may be clearly discerned by the intellectual powers; and, the will at the same time be entirely opposed to them. What the Doctor's idea is of the *tendency* the gospel hath to produce a change in men, we do not pretend to determine. But, that the clearest exhibition of gospel truth to the intellectual views of men, is, always, attended with a strong and violent opposition of the will to it *until the heart be changed by the immediate power of God*, we suppose capable of proof, both from the holy scriptures, and from experience. If the Doctor infers from this sentiment that “the gospel is no tender to the unregenerate,” it will lie upon him to support his inference.

The Doctor supposeth injustice is done him in the remarks made in the “Essay” on what he had written, in his “Examination,” on the subject of *means*, &c. particularly in page 114—116. He chargeth the author of the Essay with having dismembered his sentences, and thereby given an unjust representation of his sentiments. Upon a review of what we had written, we do not find that we had misrepresented the meaning of our author. We quite agree with him in what he says in the “Examination continued.” “Possibly the Examiner did not express his sentiments clearly,”* upon this subject. Had we continued our quotation, which the Doctor has supplied, p. 152. we, still, do not see that it would have given a different aspect to his sentiments. He had said that it cannot be proposed that men should act “from the highest spiritual principles while unregenerate.” By the *highest spiritual principles* we apprehended he meant *those which are truly gracious*—which distinguish the
regenerate

regenerate from the unregenerate. If this were not his meaning, it were to be wished he had, now, explained himself more fully. And, if this were really his true meaning, it will stand thus, *It cannot be proposed to the unregenerate to act from truly spiritual and gracious principles.* Therefore all that can be proposed to the unregenerate is, that they should act from *those principles* of "ingenuity, gratitude, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, &c." of which they are now, in fact, possessed. These, it is admitted, are not the *highest spiritual principles.* And, as there are no *higher spiritual principles*, in any man, than those which distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate; we had, we supposed, sufficient reason to consider the Examiner as denying that unregenerate men are "commanded, invited, exhorted" to act from truly gracious and spiritual principles. We have no wish to misrepresent the sentiments of any one. Perhaps the reader will find the Doctor's own explanation to be satisfactory. It is this, viz. that it cannot be proposed to unregenerate men to act from the highest spiritual principles *as a medium of regeneration.* He says, "Now to propose any thing as a *medium* of conversion, which would imply that the thing itself hath taken place, the Examiner supposed, and still believes, to be absurd." But to propose to the unregenerate to act from the highest spiritual principles *as a medium of regeneration*, would be to suppose regeneracy had already taken place.* Having given this explanation, he adds, "That it is the duty of the unregenerate to forsake their sins—that they have no excuse for making any delay in turning to God—that they are obliged to love him with all their heart—and, consequently, to act from *moral and spiritual principles* they are not possessed of, or endowed with, the Examiner fully believes, nor hath he ever denied." After all, the subject remains embarrassed: nor is it easy to see the consistency of the several things which the

* p. 153, 154.

the Doctor hath now said upon it. It seems, by many things he has said, to be his opinion, that there are *appointed means* for sinners to use *in order* to their regeneration. He says, in the Examination, "It is the united voice of Calvinistic Divines, that there is the greatest possible encouragement to the *endeavours* of *unconverted men* in the use of the means of salvation."* In his "Strictures" he says, "Perhaps Mr. West's *real sentiment* is, that there is no *medium* of regeneration."§ We suppose he means to suggest that Mr. West's *real sentiment* is, that there is nothing required to be done by the sinner *in order* to his regeneration. The Doctor, we doubt not, would reprobate such a sentiment as this: and, therefore, would consider the unregenerate as *commanded, invited, &c.* to act from the natural principles of hope, fear, &c. since, in order to regeneration, it cannot be required of them to act from truly spiritual and gracious principles.

But, if the *unregenerate* have no excuse for making *any delay* in turning to God—if they are *obliged* to love him with all their heart—and consequently to act from *moral* and *spiritual* principles they are not possessed of; What is there left for them to do *in order* to conversion or regeneration? If men are *obliged* to act from *moral* and *spiritual* principles they are not possessed of; they cannot be *obliged* to act from *natural* and *different* principles *in order* to obtain these *spiritual* ones. To say that the unregenerate are obliged to do, or act, any thing *in order* to regeneration, and as a *mean* of it; is the same as to say that they are not *immediately* bound to act from those *spiritual* principles which distinguish the regenerate: and, consequently, that they have *some excuse* for making *delay* in turning to God. How could his readers avoid supposing this to be the real sentiment of the Examiner, when they hear him assert that men are not "commanded to act from principles they are not endowed with—that it can-
" not

“not be proposed that they should act from the highest spiritual principles while unregenerate ; and *this notwithstanding the explanation given in the “Examination continued ?”* He had said, “such faculties, principles, powers and affections as they are possessed of—are the *only* principles they can be required to *act from* and improve.” These powers and principles he *now* explains to mean *natural* ones—those which the *unregenerate* possess ; therefore, not *spiritual*. If men can be “commanded, invited, exhorted” to act from *no other* principles than these, even according to the Doctor’s own explanation of the term *principles*, Will he at the same time deny that the unregenerate are destitute of any power to act from these principles, which the regenerate are endowed with for acting from the principles which *they* possess ?

The Doctor says, “If it was not with design, but wholly for want of understanding what the opinion and real sentiment of the Examiner is, that Mr. West hath *so grossly misrepresented* him, he can easily forgive this wrong.”* Whether we *have misrepresented* the opinion and real sentiment of the Examiner, is left to the candid public to judge.

But, for further light respecting his sentiments on the subject of means, the Doctor turns us to the first section of the “Examination continued.” Here he tells us, that “By the gospel God calleth upon all men every where to repent, and believe in his Son for reconciliation and salvation”—that He (God) also gives his spirit with his gospel, of which *unregenerate men* receive a measure :” and immediately adds, that “to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.”§ If unregenerate men receive a measure of the spirit, and have promises made to them of receiving *abundance* upon their asking in the exercise of that spirit a measure of which they now have, What *power* can they now want in order to do

O o

every

every thing that is required of them, *which* the regenerate possess? The Doctor proceeds immediately to observe, "We do not ascribe any self-derived, independent power, either to *unregenerate* or *regenerate* men, but such only as they have received from God, of which they are not, strictly speaking, the proprietors, but stewards." But, do you not, Sir, really ascribe the same powers to both? Do you ascribe any higher power to the *regenerate* than one whereby they may ask, with a *promise* of receiving? And, do you not ascribe the same to the *unregenerate*? After this no one will be surprised to hear the Doctor represent common and special grace as scarcely distinguishable. He tells us that "preparatory and regenerating grace are the operation of the same spirit. The transition from one to the other is not easily discerned. 'Tis a nice thing to draw the line exactly between common and special grace, admitting a specific difference."* Must it not, then, be a thing *equally nice* to distinguish between the *powers* of the regenerate and the unregenerate? In a case of such *nicety* as this, if we had misapprehended the Examiner in what he said respecting the use of means, and the powers of men, we think we may stand excused.

But, the Doctor has not told us upon what authority he asserts the transition from *preparatory* to *regenerating* grace to be not easily discerned. Doth he suppose the transition from *rebellion* to *submission* to be so small? Is the change in regeneration such as to be scarcely discernible? Is it so nice a thing to draw the line of distinction between *enmity* and *friendship*? And, are not the unregenerate *universally* represented, in the holy scriptures, as enemies to God? It is true, indeed, that we have no other way to distinguish any divine operations, one from another, than by the *effects* produced by them. But, we attribute the same kind of distinction, in this regard, to the operations, as are found in the effects. Viewed in this light, the transition

* P. 53.

transition from *every thing that takes place in the unregenerate sinner*, or with respect to him, to a state of regeneracy, is great—yea, exceedingly great; he being brought out of *darkness into marvellous light*—old things being done away in him, and *all things become new*.

In the close of his remarks upon our misrepresentation of what he had said upon the subject of *means, and the powers of the unregenerate*, the Doctor observes, “The Examiner is willing, upon the whole, that what is offered on the subject of means, p. 111—116. of the Examination, should stand as it doth.” We only add, that we do not find that, in the “Examination continued,” he has thrown any new light upon the subject, or represented it to any greater advantage.

Speaking, in the “Examination,” of the powers of the *unregenerate*, and their capacity of being benefited *through their own endeavours in the use of the means of grace*, the author reprobates the distinction which has often been made of *moral* from *natural* powers. He observes that “to say that their incapacity” (the incapacity of the *unregenerate* to use the means of grace successfully) “is not *natural*, but *moral*, is saying nothing to the purpose, as we trust hath been shewn. If the incapacity be *real*, it is no matter under what name it goes.”* By the capacity of *unregenerate* men, of good effect from the means of grace, *through their own endeavours in the use of them, and the common strivings of God’s Spirit*, which he speaks of, on the page just mentioned; we suppose he means the same as a *power* to use these means to good effect: and, the rather, as he had, just before, been speaking of the “*power*” of the *unregenerate* “to use the means of grace.” But if *unregenerate* sinners possess both *natural* and *moral* capacity, or power, through the strivings of God’s Spirit, to use the means of grace to good effect, By the want of *what power*

O o 2

are

* p. 115.

are or can they be distinguished from the *regenerate*? And, from what principles, of which they are not now possessed, can they be *obliged* to act? After rejecting, on the last mentioned page, the distinction between *natural* and *moral* incapacity, the Examiner proceeds, "Is it *determined beforehand*, that any of the unregenerate shall not use the means of grace, or shall not succeed? If it is, let any man show how the gospel can be a privilege to them, or they liable to a greater damnation for abusing it." Can the idea here expressed be any other, than, that if a successful and beneficial use of the means of grace, amongst men, depends on the *decree* and *will* of God, the gospel can be no privilege? And, if not, What is the distinction betwixt the *powers*, or *capacities*, of the regenerate and the unregenerate?

We will not again presume to suggest what the Doctor's *real sentiments* are of the powers of the unregenerate, lest we should be guilty of misrepresentation. If the reader can collect them from the "Examination," with the assistance offered him in the "Examination continued," he has our full liberty, and our wishes for his success. We would remark, however, the confidence with which the Examiner rejects the generally received doctrine of the *divine decrees* and *particular election*. Yea, so very confident is he that there is no truth in this doctrine, that he challengeth any man, on this principle, to show that the gospel is a privilege to the unregenerate. With these few strokes of his pen has he thus annihilated this doctrine!

But, we proceed to some further remarks.

The Doctor tells his readers, in his *Strictures*,* that he is charged, by the author of the *Essay*, with "disingenuity and unfairness, injustice and want of candour;" with being "no lover of truth, nor an honest inquirer after it—with writing from envy, to cast an odium, and raise a popular cry;"—and, "that

* p. 156.

“that he is condemned as a *libertine*, heretic,” &c. Also, that we have represented those “who cannot believe that God is the efficient cause of all the wickedness of men and devils, as men of *corrupt minds—destitute of the spirit of God, irritated with plain evangelical truth, of a proud and haughty spirit,*” &c.* On which we only observe, that the Doctor had no need to apply to himself, or to any particular class of men, things which we have said of *human nature in general* in its present fallen state. Nor, had he any authority to say that we represented him as *designing* to propagate and establish *such sentiments* as those to which *we believe* the general scheme which he has advanced naturally tends, and in which it ultimately terminates. If he can find any passage in the Essay in which all, who do not believe the Deity to be the efficient cause of all wickedness, are represented as *men of corrupt mind—destitute of the Spirit of God,* &c. the author will hold himself under obligation to make the fullest retraction.

Perhaps the reader may judge that the author of the Essay has misrepresented the Examiner in what is said, p. 104. of said Essay. There we observed that “to deny the prescience of God, or adopt a scheme of doctrine which cannot be reconciled with his certain foreknowledge of all events, carries an imputation on God *as really* dishonourable to him, as any of the obnoxious sentiments supposed by our author to be contained in that tract of Mr. Edwards upon which he is animadverting. And, yet this is a difficulty with which our author’s scheme is *confessedly* embarrassed.” It is admitted that the passage will bear this construction, viz. “that the Doctor’s scheme is *confessedly* embarrassed with the difficulty of being *irreconcilable* with the divine foreknowledge of all events;” yea, that this is the most natural construction. In this representation we frankly acknowledge that the Doctor is injured; and, condemn our own inadvertence

* p. 159, 160.

vertence in making it. The "intimation" which the Doctor has given us, in his *Strictures*, of the mistake, has indeed made quite a different impression on our mind, from what the misrepresentation itself appears to have made on his; as, we can receive it without those strong sensations of disgust and contempt with which he seemed possessed when he gave it.

But, that the Doctor's scheme is embarrassed with difficulties arising from the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, he doth not pretend to deny. Yea, he expresses it as his opinion that the *wisest of men* consider the divine prescience as incapable of being reconciled with (what he styles) liberty in the creature, *by any human understanding*. * The Doctor ought to have due credit for so frank a confession: and, we may hence conclude that this is a difficulty which he will never surmount—a difficulty, under the heavy weight of which the scheme of doctrine he has advanced must lie till a greater light shines than is ever expected to appear in our world.

The representation which the Doctor gives, § of the hypothesis advanced in the second part of the "Essay," we think is unjust. However, the reader will judge for himself. What authority he had to represent it as our opinion that *multitudes* will perish, while *few only* will be saved; and, that these multitudes were made sinners in order to secure the future obedience and promote the happiness of *these few*; we know not. When the reader turns to the several places to which the Doctor refers him for his authorities, we feel confident, he will find that no such sentiments are there expressed. That the awful manifestations of the divine displeasure against sin in the eternal torments of the damned, will greatly enhance the ideas of the divine glory, and in that way be a mean of establishing the authority of the Deity, and securing the future obedience, both of saints and angels; is what

* p. 96. § p. 164.

what we fully believe: nor, do we find that the Doctor hath offered any reasonable objection against the truth and justness of the sentiment. Whether any thing further than this is advanced by the Essayist, on this head, the candid reader is to determine for himself. When our author asks, "What warrant Mr. West, or any man, hath to say that, had not moral evil existed, the Governor of the world could not have exhibited his hatred of sin, his love of holiness, his goodness and authority, *illustriously* in other ways?"* He, prudently enough for himself, changeth the ground of the debate. Did Mr. West, or any other man, ever assert that the Deity could not have manifested his perfections *illustriously*, had moral evil never taken place? The Doctor must be sensible that this is a point which was never contested by the author of the Essay. Why then doth he endeavour to represent him to the public as guilty of such presumption? That the taking place of sin will be the *occasion* of *brighter* manifestations of the divine glory, and *more illustrious* displays of the perfections of God, is what we fully believe: any thing further than this, we did not presume to urge.

The Doctor further, on the last quoted page, insinuates to his readers that we had represented all those who do not agree with us in what we had said on the *preferableness and desirableness of moral evil*, as he *phraseth* it, as being "*prejudiced, sour, bitter,*" &c. In reply to this charge we have only to ask the reader to turn to the passage to which the Doctor refers him for its support. This is all we need say for refuting it.

The Doctor's abhorrence of the sentiments advanced in the "Essay," expresseth itself much more in strong exclamation, than in solid and rational argument. He tells his readers, at the close of his "Strictures," that the author ought to be "withstood to the face as one who hath spoken wickedly for God."

We

We are willing to be resisted, in any thing we have advanced, with the weapons of *reason* and the *oracles of God*. To the force of these, we hope, we shall cheerfully yield. The word of God is the sole rule by which controversies of this kind are ultimately to be decided. We shall be under obligation thankfully to acknowledge the kindness of any man who will point out to us in what respects we have perverted it. The section "on texts of scripture misconstrued," has not furnished the opportunity for our acknowledging our obligations, in this respect, to the author.

The Doctor thus concludes his Strictures, "When
 "impious tenets are publicly advanced, a vindication
 "of the divine character forbids us to be unconcern-
 "ed. If any thing we have said towards the close of
 "these Strictures, should have the appearance of *se-*
 "verity, that severity hath not the *person*, but the
 "opinions of our author for its object—opinions to
 "which too strong a dislike cannot be expressed—We
 "have, at the same time, aimed to keep in mind the
 "Apostolic advice, *in meekness instructing those that*
 "*oppose themselves*." The sincerity and warmth of
 the Doctor's opposition to the sentiments contained in
 the "Essay," there is not the least room to question.
 But, he seems to feel the need of some apology for the
appearance it may, possibly, be imagined there is of
severity, towards the close of his Strictures. *This*, he
 tells us however, hath not the *person*, but the *opinions*
 of the author of the Essay, for its object. This apol-
 ogy may readily be admitted: for, *opinions* dread no
severity but that of *fair, sound argumentation*. Here
 the Doctor stands justly excused. As to the measure
 of his *meekness* in the *instructions* he has given us, we
 shall not take upon us to decide. Had there been a
 greater mixture of *argument*, they would not have
 been less convincing. Whether his instructions exceed
 in the *strength of the reasonings* they exhibit, or the
meekness of the manner in which they are given, we
 profess ourselves to be unable to determine. All we
 can

can say, is, we presume there is room left for improvement in both.

Unhappy it is, that controversies on the most solemn and important subjects are too frequently managed with a spirit, an acrimony, which tend rather to disgrace the authors, than to recommend the sentiments they advance. The public will not expect controversial writings to be free from these imperfections, so long as the hearts of men remain so much under the power of prejudice as to lead to so great a difference of sentiment as evidently runs through the writings of the Doctor, now before us, and the preceding Essay. If, amidst the *personalities* which may be found in each, the candid mind of the reader can find any thing that is instructive; while he pities the failings of the authors, he will embrace the light which he discovers amidst so many imperfections. And, every cordial friend to the cause of Christ will be excited fervently to wish and pray for the commencement of that happy period, when the *watchmen shall see eye to eye*—when all the professed ministers of Christ shall have the love of the truth in their hearts; and, shall unite, with one heart, and with one voice, to proclaim *that glorious system of truth which is really contained in the gospel of Christ.*

AMEN.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	
19.	12.	for formed, read <i>found</i> .
26.	4.	for exerciseth, read <i>excuseth</i> .
31.	24.	for and, read <i>or</i> .
36.	18.	for thought, read <i>that</i> .
40.	3.	from bottom, for And, read <i>Any</i> .
44.	7.	for invested, read <i>invented</i> .
56.	19.	for denominations, read <i>denomination</i> .
74.	14.	for formed, read <i>found</i> .
89.	4.	for every, read <i>very</i> .
92.	12.	from bottom, after i. e. insert <i>are</i> .
97.	5.	for of, read <i>in</i> .
ibid.	3.	from bottom, for meaning, read <i>reasoning</i> .
109.	1.	for non-sovereign, read <i>own</i> sovereign.
111.	8.	after it, insert <i>is</i> .
116.	13.	from bottom, for consistent, read <i>inconsistent</i> .
132.	18.	for undesigned, read <i>undesigning</i> .
146.	7.	for exposed, read <i>expressed</i> .
ibid.	18.	for even, read <i>ever</i> .
153.	3.	from bottom, for power, read <i>powers</i> .
162.	15.	for sentiments, read <i>sentiment</i> .
ibid.	19.	for ? put ;
172.	10.	from bottom, for consideration, read <i>considerations</i> .
204.	17.	for is also, read <i>it is</i> also.
213.	6.	for scene, read <i>sense</i> .



